THROUGH THE SIEVE

BY

ADDISON BALLARD, D.D.

12.20.12

Library of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by President Patton.

Division .....

Section .....

BR
125
.B322
1906

THROUGH THE SIEVE

PRINCETON
1912
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Through the Sieve

A Group of Picked Sayings Shortly Told

BY

ADDISON BALLARD, D.D.

Author of "From Talk to Text" and "Arrows; or, Teaching a Fine Art"

NEW YORK
ROBERT GRIER COOKE
INCORPORATED
MCMVI

COPYRIGHT 1906 BY
ROBERT GRIER COOKE, INC.

TO
MY SON
HARLAN HOGE BALLARD

THE AUTHOR is pleased to acknowledge the courtesy with which the Editors of The Independent, The New York Observer, Christian Intelligencer, Christian Work and Evangelist, Christian Observer, Interior, The Presbyterian, Sunday School Times and Christian Endeavor World have given their cordial consent to the use here of such communications by the author as have, from time to time, appeared in their respective periodicals.

MOTTO AND MOTIVE

If, free from all that morbid distrust which complains that the world is cold and unfeeling, we go forward to meet it with open hearts of sympathy, and ready hands of help, we shall surely succeed, both in making the world better and happier and in ourselves being made better and happier by the world.

CONTENTS

I

PAGE

Three Travelling Companions 1
The Unchangeable Past 1
The World's Yesterday 1
New-snuffed 2
Turned, but Not Stopped 2
What We Can 3
The Patience of Growth 3
Write to Me about Heaven 5
Charitable to Worms 6
Not Complaining, but Next Door to It 7
Deeper than Regret 7
God's Love for the Sinless 7
Faith Tested by Doubt 8
A Test of Power 8
An Ingot of Love 10
Fancy for Fact 10
Safety in Truth-telling 11
The Impracticables 11
Making the Best of a Mistake 13
How Cathedrals do Not Grow, and How Oaks and Lilies Do 14
Inanimation 15
What Comes from Looking 16
Instantaneous Verification 17
Praying Overdone 17
Out-of-Place Resolutions 19
The True Confessional 19
The Ring and the Feast 20
Unfailing and Undiscouraged 20
Whirled 21
The Troubleman 22

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE TRUE MASTER 23
AN UNSUSPECTED NAME 24
GIVING ENVY THE SLIP 24
BIBLE PERSPECTIVE 26
HIDDEN LINKS 28
EYES THAT SEE 28
LIFE, LORD OVER DEATH 29

II

A SURE GUIDE AND GOAL 30
SIGHT-WORSHIP 32
BIBLE KAKOGRAPHY 33
THE RIGHT OF WAY 34
EASILY STOPPED 34
A COUNTERFEIT OF LIFE 35
GAIN IN BEAUTY; LOSS IN POWER 35
HEAPING AND GROWING 36
TAKING IN AND GIVING OUT 36
THE PTERIGIUM OF PREJUDICE 38
SIFTED 39
PRYING UNDER 40
"AHA" 40
CONSISTENCY IN WRONG 41
REMEMBERED AND FORGOTTEN 42
AN UNSAFE VENTURE 43
A DISHONOR TO GOD'S LOVE 44
WELCOME HOME 45
NO SECOND-BIRTH SUICIDE 46
A HIDDEN DANGER 46
INTERCESSION FOR THE ILL-DESERVING 47
SAVED 48
CREATED TO GOOD WORKS 49
GROWING; NOT TO GRACE, BUT IN IT 50
SOMETHING TO EAT 50

CONTENTS

PAGE

Climbing 51
The Spider's Foot for the Spider's Web 52
The One Thing that Counts 52
Not "It," but "I" 54
The One Temptation 55
Quitting His Observatory 57

III

A New Chime of Old Bells 59
Neighborliness Next to Godliness 59
An Unwelcome Gift 61
A Footpath Venture 64
Weaned 66
Two Summers 68
Perfect at Last 70
An Original Guest 71
Varnish and Vitality 73
Apart and in Secret 75
Vulture and Dove 77
The Lower Ennobled by the Higher 79
"Isms" and "Ists" 81
Going Through the Motions 82
The First and Second Births 83
Unused Spices 85
The Successful Plea 88
Common-sense, Faith and Ignorance 89

IV

A Religion of Facts 93
The Multitude of the Saved 96
Enjoyment Following Surrender 98
The Silent Life 100
Prayer Endings 104

CONTENTS

PAGE

A Lesson in Christian Warfare 107
Saving Himself and His Hearers 108
Eddy and Stream 110
Beyond Peradventure 111
Reintroductions 112
The Cross a Symbol of Obedience 114
Opportunity, the Test of Character 117
The Weighing of a King 119
Paul's Quarrel with Peter 121
Not a Hoof Behind 124
From Abel to Zacharias 126
Self-harming Haste 128
Our One Concern 133
A Quick Turn from Sorrow to Joy 139
Satan's Fall Foreseen 143
Love's "Finally" 144

V

From Cell to Song 147
Best of All 147
Recompense 147
At Home to Stay 148
Just as Thou Art 149
The Haystack Centennial: 1806-1906 150

THROUGH THE SIEVE

The essence of aphorism is not so much ingenuity as good sense brought to a point.

JOHN MORLEY

A weighty adage may sometimes do more good than a labored discourse.

MATTHEW HENRY

THROUGH THE SIEVE

I

THREE TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

It is but a short distance that Duty travels alone. She is not long on the road before she overtakes Love, and it is then not long before Duty and Love overtake Joy, and the three become thereafter inseparable companions and continue and complete their heavenward journey together.

THE UNCHANGEABLE PAST

Moment by moment the fluent future stiffens into the unchanging and unchangeable past. With solemn exactness the pulseless hand of Time is shaping the enduring mould and the story of our lives is flowing into it, fixed in the eternal stereotype of God's omniscience.

THE WORLD'S YESTERDAY

The Clock of History beats centuries instead of seconds, and the millenniums of men are but the yesterdays of God.

NEW-SNUFFED

When a certain New England divine, whose evangelistic zeal was taken by his brethren as a sign of doctrinal unsoundness, was asked pointedly if he were not one of the "New Light" theologians, he answered promptly, "No, I am not a 'New Light'; I am only an old light, new-snuffed."

TURNED, BUT NOT STOPPED

Half-way between North and South Williamstown, Mass., the impetuous current of Green River running northward strikes at right angles against a ledge of immovable limestone. The obstruction, however, does not lessen in the least the volume, force or freedom of the stream. Cheerfully complying with this unmistakable command that it proceed no farther in its former direction, without a moment's cavil or complaint, the stream instantly turns to the east; and although appearing confused and agitated for a moment, yet a few rods farther down we see it flowing on just as freely and rejoicingly as ever, watering without stint and freshening with beauty the new banks within which Nature has seen fit to direct its course.

"The Spirit suffered them not" was the rock against which two gospel preachers once ran when attempting to enter a new field of their own selection. But although turned back, they do not complain. The headlong current of their zeal suffers not the slightest abatement. It finds no difficulty in turning a

short corner. With the full force of its original impulse it flows across the Ægean into Macedonia, where its course is marked by new churches springing up along that unsought but divinely-selected coast.

Next to love as an incentive to Christian labor is the assurance that God gives shape and turn to our endeavors and determines the form and measure of our success.

WHAT WE CAN

The old farmer is still busy. Too feeble longer to swing the scythe, he rakes after the cart.

The out-worn railway engineer is not wholly retired at once. He is given an easier position, and is glad to take it.

The overtaxed teacher teaches fewer subjects and fewer hours. That prince of teachers, President Mark Hopkins, of Williams College, continued to meet some of his former classes to almost the last day of his fourscore and five years.

Compelled by physical infirmity to forego his ordinary pulpit ministrations, the retired preacher may yet address by pen and press an unassembled multitude far exceeding in number his, for a time, sorely missed Sabbath congregation.

If no longer what we would, then not only submissively, but cheerfully and thankfully, what we can.

THE PATIENCE OF GROWTH.

Madame D'Arblay once wrote to her son in college,

"We never touch others where we study to show that we are touched ourselves. You once wrote me a letter so very fine that if it had not made me laugh, it would have made me sick. Be natural and you will be sure to please without wasting your time."

A famous picture which it took Sir Joshua Reynolds but ten hours to paint, represented twenty years of study and practice. Dr. Lyman Beecher, on being asked how long it took him to compose a certain masterly discourse, is said to have nonplussed his admiring parishioner by the reply, "To write that sermon? Why, sir, it took me thirty years!"

Precocity is risky. The sapling trying to swell at once to the size and glory of an oak would only, by the bursting of its bark, put back by so much its normal growth.

Look at the scalloped, delicate lines of the sea-beach. They tell the limits of the spreading surf, where lay the frill of the apron which the breakers shook out upon the strand. They seem, at first, like the marks which he who leaps for mastery makes as soon as his feet strike the ground. But these lines more than tally the successive achievements of shallow, rival waves. The waves themselves were not born of either the moment or the shore. They are not the outcome of a spasmodic summoning up of an ambitious energy. They register for the wide, unfathomable sea; the sea which fills great submarine valleys, and covers hidden mountain peaks, and kisses the rim of the great Atlantic basin on either hemisphere. Small and delicate

as those lines are, they are here and could be here only because of what the ocean is, and of what the moon is, and of what the tides are. They are not a performance, but the tokens of a great life, a sublime actuality, a true and mighty existence.

In like fashion, should each man's mental, ethical and spiritual endeavors be—not a series of ambitious, convulsive performances, but—a life, the spontaneously growing fruit of a good tree—representing honestly Tennyson's

"The fruitful hours of slow increase."

WRITE TO ME ABOUT HEAVEN

As any life, so any and every death means a great deal to Jesus. "There goes a funeral procession," says one. "That's nothing," says the other, "funerals somewhere in the city every day of the year." Very likely some indifferent by-stander said that about the funeral procession that went out of the gate of the city of Nain. But it was not Jesus who said it. His heart was with the widowed mother's heart breaking over the loss of her only son. Nor do I think it was for that mother's sake only that Jesus stopped the bier and restored her son to life. It was to assure us that there is nowhere and never a death, no, not even of a little child, that does not mean a great deal to Him. He consoles us by instructing us how to interpret the open grave of any dear child of God. "What are you digging that hole for?" I ask the King's gardener. "To bury this seed in," he replies; "a seed from the

King's conservatory—a small, weak thing, but from it rises a beautiful flower for the King's palace."

Such was the unshaken and comforting belief of the friend who, writing to me of the loss of one very dear to her, said, "Write to me, but do not write a letter of condolence. Write to me about heaven."

CHARITABLE TO WORMS

Many persons like butterflies who are not fond of caterpillars. You try to reason with them. You ask, "Do you not know that this despised caterpillar will be a butterfly one of these days; a beautiful, airy, winged creature; a floating, flying flower?"

"It may be an incipient butterfly, for all I know about it," the answer is, "but just now it is a worm and nothing but a worm; an ugly, crawling thing. Butterflies I like well enough, and when this worm, if it ever does, gets to be a butterfly, I will like it, but not before."

Here is a man who is a Christian, you are told. He doesn't act much like a Christian, though. He is irritable, impatient, narrow, conceited, discourteous, proud, arrogant, envious; or he is stupid and awkward; or he is gloomy and unsocial. But his name is on the church records and you are told that you must love him, not because he is perfect, but because he is a Christian and because he will be a beautiful, a sanctified character, one of these days, in heaven. You reply, "Well, when he gets into that shape, I will love him, but not before."

It is no doubt true that we shall admire and love some persons in another world that we do not greatly admire or love in this.

But just here, a caution; don't let those who are not butterflies themselves, as yet, take too much upon them as if they were. They, too, are still in the vermicular stage, and about themselves are some things not altogether pleasing or perfect. Let worms be charitable to worms.

NOT COMPLAINING, BUT NEXT DOOR TO IT

I do not complain; at least, I do not mean to complain; yet I often say or think somewhat gloomily: "This seems to be a part of my trial and I suppose I must bear it." But would I say that were I truly and wholly submissive?

DEEPER THAN REGRET

True repentance, as distinguished from mere worldly sorrow, means a quick, clean cutting off of the old sinning and sinful self, leaving no ragged edges of shamed and floundering regret.

GOD'S LOVE FOR THE SINLESS

Monotony breeds inappreciation. We forget God's goodness to us from our having come to take it as a matter of course. The father's love for the "elder son in the field" was as true and as strong as was his love for the husk-eating prodigal. It would, however,

have remained unexpressed but for the younger son's repentance and return. It would have been exercised and expressed in the same way of forgiveness toward the elder brother, had he been the one to leave, and the younger to stay.

It is because the angels understand this better than did the complaining elder brother that there is joy in heaven over one repenting sinner, more than over ninety and nine that need no repentance.

Mercy comes as a new after-thought. It is the fulness of love discovered to itself.

FAITH TESTED BY DOUBT

Victor Hugo speaks of darkness as a quickener of the eyesight: "As the pupil of the eye dilates in the night until it at last finds day, even so the soul dilates in misfortune until it at last finds God."

Jesus foresaw the doubt and perplexity into which His disciples would be plunged by His death. He knew that Cleopas would say long before he said it: "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." This doubt and anxiety He might have easily enough prevented. He might have "opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures" before His resurrection as well as after. It was by being left for a while in doubt that they learned to trust in the dark.

A TEST OF POWER

Taking up to read for the first time Mrs. Browning's poem, "The Seraphim," I find it introduced thus: "It

is the time of the crucifixion, and the Father of the Crucified One has directed toward earth the angels of His heaven, of whom all have departed except Ador the Strong One and Zerah the Bright One. The place is outside the shut heavenly gate."

It coming to me that I shall better appreciate the poem if I first try my own hand at it, I close the book and cast about for some theme in history less momentous, but nearer and more familiar. The outbreak of our Civil War suggests itself as a fitting parallel, a nation's life in peril, the call for volunteers, the quick answer of a host of young men, who at once quit happy homes for bloody battlefields. Of a given neighborhood two only are staying behind. Loving alike their country and alike sympathizing with their brothers already in the field, the stronger of the two asks impatiently of the other, "Why stand we here all the day idle?" All the weaker can do at first is to assent passively to the questioning reproach of the stronger; but, unable at length to hold out further against so manly an appeal, he yields, and both start for the scene of conflict.

I now find myself heart to heart with the poet, and taking my pen to write what, as I conceive it, Ador the Strong One will say to Zerah the Bright One, I rise more easily by this gradation of effort to the poet's more sublime conception, and am at the same time made more deeply conscious than I could otherwise be of her transcendent reach and power of imagination, and of the beauty and strength of her poetic expression.

AN INGOT OF LOVE

On this smooth agate table are a hundred chilled steel balls. How can we make them into one? Put a cast-iron band around them? But that does not make them one. I know of no way of doing it except to melt them. Then they run together of themselves.

Proud, unsubdued hearts stand stiffly and stoutly apart. How bring them into loving communion? Hoop them together by some ecclesiastical or symbolic band? They may be no nearer together than before.* But let them all be melted in sweet contrition at the feet of the crucified Jesus and they flow instantly together into one blessed ingot of love.

FANCY FOR FACT

Bishop A. once told Bishop B. in my presence that while he was kneeling at the shrine in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, he had a strong feeling of assurance that he was praying at the very place where Jesus was born.

"Oh no," exclaimed Bishop B., "your deep devotional feeling *made* a fact for you where no such fact existed; as Bishop Gobat, of Jerusalem, assures me that the most careful investigation has failed utterly to identify the so-called 'sacred places.'"

Even strong and cultured minds, we see, may be objectively misled by their subjective moods to believe

* Indeed, through pride of denomination or creed, they may be farther apart than ever.

most confidently that certain things exist that do not exist.

So of our dislikes, protests and resentments against slights, neglects or wrongs of which we are convinced that we have been the objects. Be it, that there is some ground for our resentful emotions. Dwelt upon and brooded over, they are sure to intensify themselves into gross and self-harming exaggerations.

SAFETY IN TRUTH-TELLING

We are safe in our talk only as we say the thing that is in our thought. He who prevaricates touches the spring of a hidden trap whose pitiless jaws fly up in the least expected moment and seize and hold fast their despised and helpless victim. He, on the contrary, whose "yea is yea and his nay, nay," goes forth with open brow and unfearing heart, needing no hiding-place. The universe is his home, and in any part of it he is safe.

THE IMPRACTICABLES

It was the custom, so we read, of the most observing, most seriously-contemplative and wisest Teacher the world has ever seen, to make a study of children at their plays, especially where they liked best to play, in the market-places. One day as He was passing along He noticed that although the children were there as usual, they were not playing as usual. He watched them to see why. He soon saw why. He saw that

while some of the children appeared to be honest and good-natured and wanting the play to go on, the others, for some reason or other, seemed to be out of sorts; captious, cross and self-willed—ugly, in short. Nothing suited them. They said they would bolt unless they could have things their own way; and yet, strange to say, they could not agree among themselves what that way should be. The good-tempered ones tried every reasonable way to please them. "Let us try dancing," they said, and instantly they began to blow a lively tune on their toy pipes. But dance the others would not. "Suppose we play funeral, then," and at once they turned themselves into "pretend" mourners and began to make believe cry. But the discontented "fellows" would not join in the lamentation, either. And then did the great patriot-moralist and teacher see, and plainly told the people what he saw; that he saw reflected in the children's games, as in a mirror, that whole generation of men; men who by their follies and indiscretions had gotten themselves and their country into serious trouble, but who then found no end of fault with the wiser and better disposed who were trying to help them out of their difficulties, so that all might have again the same "good times" that they used to have.

How it turned out with the children we are not told. Probably the clear-headed and right-tempered ones concluded that the best way for them was to go right on with the music and dancing, and leave the impracticables to go on, if they liked, with the funeral.

MAKING THE BEST OF A MISTAKE

Paul is being taken as a prisoner to Rome at a time of the year when navigation of the Mediterranean begins to be dangerous. Accordingly, having reached the island of Crete in safety, Paul advises the centurion Julius, in whose charge the prisoners are, to wait at "Fair Havens" for settled weather. His advice is not taken. The centurion, trusting to what he deems the superior wisdom of the supercargo and ship-owner, decides to continue the voyage. He soon finds, however, that a minister of the gospel, and a prisoner at that, may possibly know something worth attending to, even about business. It is not long before the ship begins to be knocked about by an insolent and loud-mouthed sea that pays no sort of respect to the authority of even an imperial captain. Just as the apostle had foreseen, that surly giant of the Adriatic, Euroclydon, falls soon after into one of his wrathful periodic fits, and begins to buffet with merciless fury the unwary vessel.

Here is a good chance for Paul to take his revenge. The taunt would have been in order, "I gave you fair warning. You have run into this danger with your eyes open, and now you must get out of it the best way you can." But Paul is of a different spirit. It is but proper self-respect for him to say as he did: "Sirs, you should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete and to have gained this harm and loss." But this is no ugly "I told you so." Paul

does not sulk and throw up the whole business because his advice was not taken. He has no small pride that must be apologized to before he will offer help. Frankly accepting the situation, he applies himself manfully to the bettering of it. Instead of weakening his already disheartened shipmates by selfish reproaches, he strengthens them with words of cheer. He recalls their mistake, not to make capital out of it for his own reputation, but that his comrades may the more easily rise above the mistake when they see how heartily he can himself forgive and how thoroughly forget it. "One glance only at the mistake and the harm; now let it go forever, and let us do what we can to better the present and brighten the future."

HOW CATHEDRALS DO NOT GROW, AND HOW OAKS AND LILIES DO

The visitor to Morningside Heights, New York City, casts an admiring glance upward to the "Cathedral of St. John the Divine," now rising slowly but surely to its magnificent completion.

But to simple admiration would surely succeed a wonder beyond power of expression were the beholder as he stands gazing, to see the sublime structure, wall and arch and dome and tower, going higher and higher all of their own undirected and unaided accord—neither architect, superintendent or workman in sight; no scaffolding, and not only no derrick with its long sweeping arm stretched out to lift huge blocks and beams, but no beams or blocks in sight to lift.

Yet how, again, must both admiration and wonder mount to almost incredulous amazement were the already rapt beholder to be assured that all which the architect had done was to bury his plans and specifications at foundation depth, having first imparted to them the power to do as they would like with the earthy material around them; to change that formless material into bronze, marble, steel or wood; to give to each product thus transformed its own fit size and shape; to lift each to its own proper place; and, to crown all, power to drop from turret-top and pinnacle fully formed and safely folded plans and specifications for other like and alike self-erecting cathedrals.

In such case, supposing it to exist, will not this wondering beholder feel himself constrained to pause awhile and very thoughtfully to "consider" this building—"how it grows!"

INANIMATION

The violet is an original composition. Yet, in a sense, it is all borrowed—part soil, part sunlight, part water, part air. It could not be the beautiful thing it is were it not a great and persistent borrower. But neither could it be were it not also a transmuter and a composer. Borrowing, transmuting and composing make it an original product.

We make another's thought our own—"appropriate" it—only as we weave it into the texture of our own minds. Memorizing is not appropriating. Memory is the room on the ground floor of the mill

where the raw silk is stored. While the finished fabric is borrowed, in a sense, from the cocoon, it is much more than that. It is full, in every part, of invisible human brain issue; quite as much man as moth. We store up knowledge; fill our minds with it. Then we weave our own literary fabrics. It is the personal weaving that makes them original.

In mind and body alike assimilation precedes composition. A hand is composed, but after its own peculiar fashion. It grows, and is an original product. No lover offers the chemist's carbon, oxygen and nitrogen to his lady-love; he presents to her the rose. We go to market for provisions; but when we meet our friends we do not exchange lamb chops and potatoes; we shake hands.

Writers, whether of essays, sermons, lectures or poems, go first to the world's literary markets. They must go. "Give thyself to reading" was an inspired Apostle's charge to a young preacher. But when Timothy comes to preach, does he preach from a book? What is read, rather, must be made one's own by *in-animation,* just as its food the body makes its own by incorporation. Another's thought must be not simply down-written; it must be in-written as well. Then it may be written up and written out. Assimilation, nothing short of that, is honest appropriation.

WHAT COMES FROM LOOKING

"Come, look through this telescope," cries the astronomer to the hurrying passers-by. "Only look,

and you will see such glories of the sky as will give you nobler thoughts than you have ever dreamed of before." So do all those find it who heed the call, and look. And the longer they look, the more ennobled in thought and aspiration do they become.

In like manner are all those who halt their eager chase after mere worldly good, and who " with open face behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

INSTANTANEOUS VERIFICATION

Were any man to have a doubt as to the professedly correct scientific principles of the telephone, we would not call him skeptical merely, but uncandid and perverse, were he to refuse to speak through the instrument, or if he did speak, were he to refuse to hold to his ear the disk which returns the answer. For him who tries it, on the other hand, the fact of intercommunication is instantly verified.

The peace which follows faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the full felicity of loving God, and the reality of communion with Him by prayer, are susceptible of like instantaneous verification. Any man, earnest to " seek," has but to try it and he will know.

PRAYING OVERDONE

The suppliant retires from the audience-chamber of the King as soon as the King has granted his request.

He leaves the King's palace and goes out upon the King's highway to find and to rejoice in the accomplishment of his desire.

The leper came begging that he might be cleansed; the centurion that his servant might be healed. No sooner had Jesus granted the cleansing and the cure than He said to each, "Go thy way." To the sinning woman's tears of penitence came the gracious answer, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Shall the healed paralytic still hug his bed; the fever-stricken his couch after the fever has left him; Lazarus his grave-clothes, when once the life-restoring "Come forth" has been spoken; the sinner his guilt, when Jesus has declared, "I forgive"? Shall the child of God ever lie in perpetual bondage through fear of death now that Jesus has promised, "He that believeth on me shall never die"?

Has the church prayed long and earnestly that all nations, races and religions may be opened to the preaching of the Gospel? For answer comes re-commanded the ascension charge, "Go thy way. Fill to overflowing your mission treasuries. Seek out, encourage, train and send forth your choicest young men and young women to the world's end. To the world's end the world is open."

It is time to stop praying and begin acting and rejoicing when our prayer has been answered. Prolonged and agonizing supplications are then but the fruit of a halting, unready faith.

OUT OF PLACE RESOLUTIONS

A father bids his boy go at once on a certain errand. Is it in place for the boy to say, "Yes, father, I am resolved to go and do that errand for you"? He is not to resolve to go; he is to go. In such a case, resolving to obey is not to obey; it is to put off obeying.

That old stanza, once everywhere sung in New England revivals:

> "Come, humble sinner, in whose breast,
> A thousand thoughts revolve,
> Come with your guilt and fear opprest,
> And make this last resolve,"

is, therefore, wholly mistaken advice. Such a resolution is like a carriage-wheel lifted from the ground. "Revolve" never so swiftly, it makes not a particle of progress. Lower the indecisive axle till the tire touch the ground; now the wheel does more than revolve; it goes forward—a type of resolution coincident with action.

THE TRUE CONFESSIONAL

It would not have done at all for the prodigal to have gone to the house of some old neighbor and have there told the tale of his wickedness. It was against his father he had sinned, and to that father he must acknowledge his transgression.

There is no one but God to whom we can make unreserved confession. Should we undertake to confess to men, it would be but a half confession. We would

confess a few amiable weaknesses about which we would seem to be greatly exercised, whereas what really troubled us would be things a thousand times worse, which we would not confess at all. It is not the lava streaming down its sides that shakes Vesuvius, but the pent-up fires within.

THE RING AND THE FEAST

Had the prodigal of the parable yielded to that unworthy distrust and fear which too often beset too many of us, he would not, directly on his return, have gone to meet his father. He would, instead, have gotten over the wall of some field down the road and at an out-of-sight distance from the house, and would have gone to work there with his elder brother, saying to himself: "When father comes out and sees how much good work I have done, it may be that he will let me come home and give me a place again at the family table."

Ordinarily, when a man wants anything for himself —a coat or a pair of shoes—he buys and pays for them. A gold ring may be bought for the buyer's own use. But there are rings, we know, which are gifts and pledges of love. So the father *gave* the shoes, the robe, the ring and the feast, not because the prodigal had worked for and earned them, but because he was his boy, and because he had come home.

UNFAILING AND UNDISCOURAGED

Rising slowly in its might, a huge wave rolls in from

the ocean and dashes itself with a great roar on the beach. An inexperienced observer might well conclude that such a standard of energy as that could not long be maintained. The sea must sooner or later exhaust itself by such vast forth-putting of its power. So, for a brief interval, it would seem; the next few waves being so small and feeble. But presently in comes another long roll just as grand, just as irresistible as the first. Watch long as we will, we discover no abatement in the sea's strength. Our confidence in the constancy of the vast power at work is increased rather the longer we look.

He shows himself to be but a like impatient and superficial observer of events who, from the occasional lessened activity of the church of Christ, argues the gradual exhaustion of either God's purpose or power to regenerate the world. Back of the truce with evil which He may seem at any time to have called, His unchanging love is preparing for new onsets and victories unmatched by any that have gone before. "The Mighty God," He is also the "Everlasting Father"; as unwearying in His purpose as He is unwasting in His power.

WHIRLED

What if we do have electricity and steam to whirl us from any given meridian round the globe in, as it were, the twinkling of an eye? Can sin and sorrow be whirled out of our consciences and hearts as honey is whirled out of the cells of the honeycomb? Can we

never be easy in mind unless our bodies are forever on the go?

Better, if one must choose, a thousand times better, to sit still while God, in answer to our quiet and loving trust, unbinds the burdens of our guilt and grief, and, by an instantaneous and returnless transit, removes them from us as far as the east is from the remotest west—than travel, no matter how fast or how far, provided we must take along and bring back with us the same uneasy consciences and the same unsatisfied hearts.

Good and important as rapid transit is in itself, the real, abiding happiness of the world is to be increased, not by swifter trains, automobiles, telegrams or ships, but by a quieter and more heart-staying trust in God and by a more outgoing and outgiving love to our fellow-men.

THE TROUBLEMAN

In any city, or town's lighting-system something is always getting out of order, in either the street or house-lights. In the company's office is always on duty a man whose business it is to correct any trouble of the sort as soon as it is reported to him. This explains what I once saw hanging on the wall of an electric company's office. Next to the "dynamo-tender's report" hung the "troubleman's report."

Jesus Christ offers Himself to us as "Troubleman" for all kinds of soul distemper or disorder—no sorrow

He will not relieve, no fever of passion He will not subdue, no sin He will not forgive, no bad disposition He will not correct, no bondage of fear He will not break, no death shadow He will not illumine. The one condition of cure and comfort is that we do not bear our trouble, letting it go unreported; or, when reported, reporting it to our, perhaps, equally suffering, equally helpless fellow-mortals, instead of reporting it directly to Him.

THE TRUE MASTER

Deeper far than the incentive, " Be true to yourself," penitent trust in Christ's supplies a wholly new and sure ground of motive and effort. It is no longer the old, endless and despairing struggle against this and that particular sin; more effective by far than the effort of pride to become humble, of parsimony to become liberal, of rebelliousness to become submissive, of revengefulness to become forgiving, of vileness to become pure. What is now required of me for my salvation is not that by force of my own unaided will I henceforth love God supremely and my neighbor as myself, but that I seek and accept forgiveness for my self-confessed violations of those just requirements; not that by resolute exertion to break the chain of my depravity, I seek to become my own master and then be " true " to my still unholy " self," but that in self-distrust and self-renunciation I make Christ my Master and then be true to *Christ.*

AN UNSUSPECTED NAME

I say to an acquaintance: "I saw you in such a place, at such a time, doing so and so. I suppose it was all right, seeing it was you; but had it been some other man, I should have said at once that there was something wrong about it."

If he reply, "My long-standing good reputation will shield me from public insinuation; others not so fortified might not be able to stand the strain but I can," then is he already on the verge of making an utter shipwreck of character. No honest man asks exemption from merited reproach on the ground of a hitherto good name; on account, either, of any advantages he may enjoy of wealth, culture or social position. The same searching wind of deserved censure that blows chill and keen through the cracks of the poor man's hovel, finds its sure way through the rose-wood shutters of the rich man's palace. No baser prostitution of talent, intelligence or wealth than putting them to the unworthy use of making doubtful practices seem respectable. Putting one's religious profession to such use is basest of all.

GIVING ENVY THE SLIP

In the eyes of his fellow-townsmen it was little short of a crime that one of their young men, who had been known among them as only a humble mechanic, had quitted His native town and had achieved success abroad as a religious teacher and worker of miracles.

On His revisiting His home, it was in their thought, if not on their tongues, to challenge the genuineness of His fame by saying to Him: "Physician, heal Thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do here also in Thy country." Because of His declining to humor this supercilious and shallow prejudice they rise up as one man and thrust Him out of the town, determined to end the upstart preacher's pretensions by pitching him over the precipice on which their town was built.

The provocation was great; how did He meet it? Did He resent the rudeness, upbraid the ingratitude, denounce the injustice? Did He seek to kill the envy that sought to kill Him?

Not only did He not try to kill it; He did not try to disarm it, even. To have attempted either would have taken time and thought which could be better spent. After all, the attempt if made would have been likely to fail. Malice born of narrow-minded prejudice has great pertinacity of life.

He did better. He resorted to the calm strategy of *circumvention.* He at once foiled and rebuked the senselss opposition by a circumambiency of new and more widely useful endeavor: "He went *round about* the villages, teaching."

He did not stop to brood over slights, calumnies, rejections and ill appreciation. He let them quietly alone. Although feeling them keenly enough at the time, He yet managed to forget them by unceasing activity in His appointed work. Even for those who

had sought to destroy Him, He did what little He could but, what was vastly more to the purpose, He began at once to encircle them with a chain of loving service in behalf of others, who both gladly recognized His mission and accepted gratefully His proffered help.

BIBLE PERSPECTIVE

The traditional space put in the binding of our Bibles between the Old and New Testaments is misleading as to the oneness of the whole Book. Matthew is as truly a continuation of Malachi as Malachi is of the foregoing prophets, from a number of whom he is separated by about the same interval of time that he is from Matthew. So, too, "the Old and the New Testament Dispensations" is a misleading phrase, if taken to mean that blessings of an entirely different sort were dispensed under the "New" from those which were distributed under the "Old." The phrase respects not the matter of the dispensations, but the manner only; just as the same moisture of the air is "dispensed" in different forms and degrees, as either dew, rain, sleet, snow, or hail; just as the same gold of the king's exchequer might be dealt out as either bullion, unrecognized save by a few as part of the royal treasure, or as coin of the realm, bearing clearly on its face the king's image and superscription, and offered freely to all. Christianity is but the bullion of Judaism coined in the gospel mint, to be scattered broadcast over the earth, and made the universal currency of the world.

Will some one of the knowing ones, who are fond of asserting that the Christian's God is a mild evolution of some sterner god of the Jews, be kind enough to tell us of the time when God was ever one whit less loving, merciful, or gracious than He is to-day? Let him tell us, if he can, who but the God of the Hebrew Scriptures it was that "passed by iniquity, transgression, and sin," that was "slow to anger and of great mercy," that was "good to all, and His tender mercies over all His works." But no. Precisely the same grace, mercy, and love were dispensed then as now, only that now they are given with greater clearness and fulness, and with wider range of distribution.

No man, whatever his genius for discrimination, can rightly comprehend the map even of his own country so long as, microscope in hand, he persists in flattening his nose against the surface, content with his ability to detect minute errors in the spelling or location of small and unimportant places. It is only the man who stands far enough away from the map to get the true perspective who takes in the grand unity of the whole, or can read in the great letters stretching across the entire canvas, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, "The United States of America."

Precisely so, no near-sighted, short-range, microscopic criticism of doubtful and insignificant details can possibly gain or give any broad-minded, comprehensive view of the Bible as one Book, by one Author, with one aim.

HIDDEN LINKS

With his deep-sea fingers the geologist traces the mountain ridges which far below cleat together parted and jealous continents. So, beneath all the surface barriers of race, color, caste and sex; of rudeness or refinement; of occupation or position, the Bible makes all men to be of one family for whose salvation the one Father has made equal and full provision in the Gospel of His Son.

EYES THAT SEE

The stock-broker, produce-dealer, banker, merchant, pleasure-seeker, fashion-worshipper; each sees in the daily prints or hears at the exchanges precisely that for which he has an eye or an ear—things which others having just as good eyes and ears do not see or hear. Not the shortest "Work Wanted" in the smallest type, that upon it some eye is not riveted. What an unseeing or unhearing person needs is not better lenses or drums, but that quick attention which real interest secures.

Jonathan Edwards scanned the secular journals of his day (there were no others) for such bits of information as he could glean from them of the condition and prospects of Christ's Kingdom in any part of the world. What he had an eye for, he saw.

The "Jerusalem Hebrew Gazette" (had there been one) would have printed in small pica the rumor that certain Gentile outcasts had embraced Christianity.

Yet that small piece of news the "apostles and the brethren in Judea" (Acts 10:1-18) would have picked out from the long string of paragraphs as the gem of the collection.

LIFE, LORD OVER DEATH.

Life is more than life. It not only lives; it quickens death.

A clod of dead earth lies buried here. Left to itself, it stays dead forever. But down there in the darkness a living tendril of a living root of a living plant is feeling after this dead clod, finds and touches it, and, by touching, imparts to it of its own life; then gives to it honored fellowship with itself in all the beauty of the rose or grandeur of the oak. A life-touch and from lifeless lumps a nodding violet, a perfumed lily, a towering palm.

II

A SURE GUIDE AND GOAL

When the Arctic explorer, Nansen, announced to the crew of the *Fram* his determination to quit the ship for good and all and push his way northward alone over the ice-fields, Petersen begged that he might accompany his captain on the journey.

"It will be no child's play," said Nansen. "The journey will be one not only of severe hardship, but of great danger."

"I would not think," replied Petersen, "of taking it alone, but with you along, I know it will be all right."

The world's best framed code of morals leaves us stranded on the way to our strenuously sought goal of a perfect life as discouragingly as the *Fram* halted Nansen on his way to the Pole. In this crisis of our need, Jesus appears and encourages our quest with the assurance that, if we but follow in His steps, He will make our seeking a success.

But first He would have us consider well what following in His steps means—the living by us of the same self-denying, cross-bearing life that He Himself lived here on the earth—a life of equal love to our neighbor and of supreme love to God; the doing to others, in all our social and business relations, as

we would have them do to us; the refusing to put fame, power, wealth or selfish ease or advantage before love; the suffering of loss, if need be, in the maintaining of this high standard; meekness under wrongs done to us; forgiveness for the wrong done, and for the evil a return only of good; obedience to whatever it be God's will that we should either do or suffer.

To live such a life as this in such a world as this Jesus would at the outset have us understand is no "child's play." On the contrary, that it means hardness to be endured, dangerously misleading by-paths to be shunned, rising inclinations to turn aside or turn back to be steadfastly resisted; a fight against disloyal doubt to be fought in right soldierly fashion, and fought to a triumphant finish.

What the hardships and perils of that Arctic expedition from the *Fram* would prove to be, Nansen himself could no more tell than could his would-be follower. It would be an equal risk for them both.

In Jesus we have an experienced as well as a faithful guide. He knows the way; is Himself the way. He knows our need; just what strength for whatever weakness, what support under whatever burden of care, what succor for whatever kind of temptation, what comfort for whatever sorrow, what courage for whatever disheartening fear. More than guide, He is also a companion; eating with us the bread of whatever trial, tasting with us the cup of whatever affliction. He not only feels for us; He feels with us. Hence

the calm and fearless trust with which we go on to meet whatever the future may have in store for us, in assured confidence that we shall be welcomed, at last, to the joy, in heaven, of our faithfully followed Leader and Guide.

SIGHT-WORSHIP

In a crowd the little child holds tight to its father's hand. In the heart of a forest the traveller fears losing sight of his guide. Like the child and the traveller we are all beset by dangers, to defend us from which we need a higher wisdom than our own. For those who believe in either one Supreme Being or many superior beings, it is the greatest of comforts to know that He or they are both ever near them and ever able and willing to defend them from all that is evil and bring them to all that is good.

It is in this natural and universal feeling that idolatry, or sight-worship, has its root and, to a certain extent, its justification. If I can see the God I worship, then I know that He sees me; that He takes note of my homage, beholds my offerings and hears my prayers. Better, a thousand times better, the devout idolater than the no-God atheist or the know-nothing-of-God agnostic. For idol-worship is still worship; a humble acknowledgment of dependence on divine wisdom and strength. As much better than atheism or agnosticism as a living tree, however disfigured by unsightly excrescences, is better than a dead tree, however tall and shapely; better as crudest

petroleum, which may yet be refined to brilliancy, is better than deadly gas, however scientifically prepared, which extinguishes any light over which it is poured. Be it that idol-worship is but a pitiful mockery of the soul's deepest need, it is still a constant reminder of that unsatisfied need. Such a point of union is thus established between polytheism and Christianity as easily accounts for the welcome which the honestly inquiring idol-worshipper has gladly given to those new and trustworthy answers of Revelation which give true scope and direction to the hitherto blind impulses and aspirations of his religious nature.

BIBLE KAKOGRAPHY

Like those other "poor" of whom Jesus tells us, we have poor Bible-spellers with us always. I myself know one of them at least whom it took years to spell rightly the little Bible word "all."

It was always written plainly enough, for example, that "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin," that "All manner of sin shall be forgiven," and that "All things work together for good to them that love God." Yet, strange to say, a morbid and purblind conscience, although seeking the very rest which such assurances were intended to give, would insist on spelling the "all," s-o-m-e.

May it not be that this misography of a weak faith is even now making many a Bible reader, instead of walking in the clear sunlight of hope, grope and stumble in the gloomy labyrinth of fear?

THE RIGHT OF WAY

Wind shows its power disastrously only when it meets with opposition; only when it finds something in its path that would stop its progress. The force of water running freely is hidden; as is also that of electricity along a free wire. Digestion causes uneasiness only when the digestive energy is in some way obstructed. So, although the Gospel is a mighty power, it makes commotion only in hearts opposed to its progress. In hearts or homes where it has "free course," it is "glorified," even in its greatest energy, as a Gospel of perfect peace.

EASILY STOPPED

In less than a minute with one blade of your pocket-knife you may kill a mountain cedar while it is yet sleeping in its little, wind-swayed, cone-hammock; albeit, once grown, it holds fast its place for centuries on the slopes of Lebanon, grasping great boulders with its roots, while with its trunk and top it stands co-wrestler with the whirlwind.

A baby's foot may crush the egg of an eagle or of an anaconda; although, let it be for a little, the one will carry off a child in his strong talons and the other will strangle horse and rider in his dreadful folds.

With something of the same ease may good and evil be destroyed in their beginnings; whether a new habit, a new home, a new child, a new community, or a new nation.

A parable of Nature on the "divinely-announced importance of cradles."

A COUNTERFEIT OF LIFE

As there is an erudition which is but a mass of undigested knowledge kept idly on deposit in the cold storage of the memory, so there is a kind of monogenous morality, born of worldly prudence as its sole parent, which is but ethical behavior resolved into rule. What the tow, wire and glass eyes are to the eagle in the taxidermist's shop-window, such is a religious creed which serves no higher purpose than to keep the outward life in becoming shape; whereas the same spiritual truth digested and assimilated is what its food is to the living eagle and which makes of him a soaring aspirant of the air, the mountain and the sky.

GAIN IN BEAUTY; LOSS IN POWER

A rose may so increase the number and showiness of its petals as to lose all power of self-propagation. The sermon may be so highly adorned with the graces of style as to yield no fruit in the consciences and lives of its hearers. The liturgy may be so æsthetically elaborated as to exalt art above devotion, and so change the call from, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," to, "Worship Beauty in the holiness of the Lord."

So that, whether it be rose, rhetoric, or ritual, undue ornamentation tends alike to impotency.

HEAPING AND GROWING

Heaping is enlarging of bulk by mechanical superposition. Growing is swelling out from an organizing and unifying life-centre. We are not heaped up; we grow. Bodies, minds and hearts are for a far nobler end than to serve as so many marvellously constructed warehouses of bodies stuffed with victuals; of minds, with facts; of hearts, with creeds. The dwarf eats enough to make an athlete, the bookworm reads enough to make a scholar, the formalist believes enough to make a saint. The larder, library or litany may be mine, but what of me?

TAKING IN AND GIVING OUT

If I may be allowed the "free coinage" of a convenient word, I would say that *donability,* or the ability to give, is always conditioned upon susceptibility, which, looking at its root-meaning, we see to be simply the ability to take.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said to a friend: "Come with me out to my farm, and I will show you what a tree can do when you give it a chance!" And what was the secret of that grand old evergreen's magnificent success but that it had kept on steadily enlarging year by year its susceptibility, or taking power, until at length there was as much of the tree below ground as there was above, and until the aggregate of its leaf-surface is reckoned no longer by square yards, but by square roods?

Our orchards, vineyards and grain-fields—why do they find themselves in the condition they are to make their yearly contributions to the world's need but that they have been as quick to seek and as free to take as they are now ready and generous to give? What have their restless rootlets been but so many busy fingers spread out in all directions to feel after and find whatever the friendly soil has been free to furnish? And what have the leaves been but so many beseeching and eager palms extended to welcome the help which has been offered them in the air and in the summer's sunshine and showers? Vines and trees are generous givers only because, first, they have faithfully kept themselves in constant touch with their own proper sources of supply; because, second, they have been diligent to improve this opportunity of contact by receiving and appropriating the provision offered, and because, third, they have been careful to enlarge their power of appropriation to meet their continually growing needs.

Why is it that some Christians we see are branches clustered always with spiritual fruit, ready always with their cheerful gifts of time, thought, prayer, sympathy, money, as opportunities arise or fit occasions are presented? For the like three reasons, and for these only —because they keep themselves by an unwavering trust in closest union with Christ, the true Vine; because mind and heart are thus kept uninterruptedly open to receive the life He is ever waiting to impart, and because along with these is a constantly growing

susceptibility welcoming the larger and yet larger gifts of his inflowing love.

THE PTERIGIUM OF PREJUDICE

Once, to a man I knew, the street lights, the rail-car lights, the star-lights, and even his own home-lights, began to grow grotesquely out of shape. They all seemed like comets with long, fan-like tails. What was the trouble? Either something was wrong with one or both of the man's eyes, or else the light-dispensers of earth and sky were conspiring to vex him with unreal and distorted vision. An oculist who was consulted said that the distortion was due to a pterigium; a thin, translucent membrane which, creeping slowly over the ball of the right eye, had at length reached the pupil, where, by its obtruding edges, it was obscuring and diffracting the light. Having, although only after long delay, submitted to an operation for its removal, all objects then appeared to him in their true shape, size and proportion—no more strangeness, fault-finding or vexation.

Prejudice is a pterigium of the mind. He whose mental vision is clouded by it misconceives the motives and methods of his associates in either business, politics or religion; misinterprets the opinions of others in art, science and letters, and fails to enjoy the clear, unrefracted light of even his own home. Saddest of all, some there are whose twisting prepossessions veil from their sight even the beauty and glory of Him who alone is the world's true Light.

A man who had long suffered from a singularly perverted vision of this sort had the good sense to yield to an operation of divine surgery. "And immediately," so the account goes, the pterigium, in the form of "scales," fell from his eyes, and at once, and ever thereafter, he saw in their true light both things and persons which before had been hated, because they had been so grossly misconceived.

SIFTED

There is more in the gift of a friend than the gift. There was more in the beautiful seal sent to Goethe a few months before his death, the idea of which was conceived by the then young Carlyle and the design of which (the serpent of eternity encircling a star with the legend "Unhasting, Unresting") was sketched by Mrs. Carlyle and sent by "Fifteen Englishmen"—there was more in the seal than in the seal itself—"a memorial," as the givers wrote, "of the gratitude we owe you and which we think the whole world owes you."

There is more in the thanks for such a gift than the thanks. The thanks are a return of the proffered love.

Gifts, however beautiful or costly, are but shadows and like shadows they pass away. Is the gift a gem? It may be crushed or lost. Is it a more brilliant gem of speech? Crystallized in words of whatever tongue, yet all tongues shall cease. Is knowledge the gem? It shall vanish away. The love, of which the gift is

but the expression, abides. Sift all the domestic, social, commercial, political, educational, religious activities which make up the varied life of this our busy world; only so much of love to God and man as comes out of it all, endures. The remainder is but chaff, ere long to be blown away and to disappear.

PRYING UNDER

Confidingness of the open heart is what one must have who would receive help from either man or God. That sort of prying underneath which we rightly call "suspicion" makes it next to impossible for the would-be giver of either counsel or comfort to carry into effect the purpose of his good-will. Little can be done either with or for one, the door of whose heart is rendered wellnigh inaccessible by a Cerberus brood of frowning suspicions and growling doubts.

"AHA"

That simple-hearted Christian has much to learn who does not yet know with what "jealous leer malign" the devil and the children of the devil eye him askance as, all unconscious of harm, he walks in the pleasant garden of the Lord; the eagerness with which they watch for his halting, the secret gladness with which they catch at the slightest dereliction; and how, upon observing it, they wag their heads and say, "Aha, aha," and at the same time more fondly than ever caress their own impiety, lust or greed.

CONSISTENCY IN WRONG

No greater mistake can be made or conceived in the ethical sphere than that of fancying that by some contradictory process of moral, or rather of *im*moral alchemy, evil resolutely persisted in becomes good; injustice, justice; discourtesy, courtesy; wrong, right; falsehood, truth.

Even so great and so good a man as David seems once to have gotten it into his head that "a lie well stuck to is as good as truth," and that a wrong well followed up ceases after awhile to be a wrong, and is as good as the right.

David had deeply injured Uriah by the wrong he had done to Bathsheba, Uriah's wife. When David came to reflect upon it, two courses were open to him. One was frankly to acknowledge to Uriah the wrong he had done and ask his forgiveness. Being a king did not excuse or exempt David from doing that duty. Rather, his higher position made the duty more imperative.

The other course was to cover up his crime, if he could, by neutralizing the evidence of its existence. Had David succeeded in that he would very likely have carried his injurious treatment of Uriah no further. Only the self-denying loyalty of his faithful subject foiled the king's deceptive purpose. Under other circumstances this manly devotion of Uriah would have touched David's heart. But failing to make an instant retreat from that false path he had

begun to tread, he is pushed on by a fatal consistency in wrong to rush still further in that downward path. So to adultery and false pretence of regard for Uriah's welfare David now adds the crime of murder. He sends a secret order to Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, to make it as certain as he can that Uriah will be slain.

David, no doubt, felt a measure of relief when the tidings was brought to him of the unsuccessful battle and of Uriah's death. The last obstacle was now taken away to the full accomplishment of his first guilty purpose, and he crowns the enormity by taking Bathsheba to be his wife.

To appearance David has scored a great success in his selfish, ungrateful crime. But has he? The narrative closes with these few but fearfully significant words: "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord."

One natural law, at least, does not hold good in the spiritual world. It is only down to a certain point that water grows more dense and heavy by increase of cold. After that degree of temperature has been passed and until freezing begins additions of cold cause the water both to expand and to become lighter.

But never comes there the time when added wrong does not lend added weight to crime and guilt.

REMEMBERED AND FORGOTTEN

Jesus remembers what we forget, and forgets what we remember. He forgets our sins, but remembers

whatever kindness we may have done to even the least of His brethren, and will remind us of it when He shall come and sit in judgment upon the throne of His glory.

AN UNSAFE VENTURE

Full trust in God's leadership once enabled a company of escaping fugitives to pass safely through the wainscoted walls of a dangerous sea.

When their pursuers saw how securely they went on, the pursuers "assayed" to do the same. "Where these go, we can go," they said; "more surely and safely even, seeing we are so much better equipped. We have horses, chariots and arms, while they are unarmed and on foot."

The pursued, however, had one more than countervailing advantage. The pillar of cloud separating the hosts was bright only to the first. It was not a revolving light, shining equally on each in turn. It was continual "cloud and darkness to those, but it gave light by night to these."

For the pursuers, therefore, it was a rash and, as it proved, a fatal experiment. The waters closed in upon them in the darkness and they perished.

Through the valley of the shadow of death moves the guiding pillar of God. It is not a revolving pillar. Only the front, the heavenward side, shines. Would we share its brightness and its safety, we must leave the back, dark side of the pillar, go forward and take

our places among the trusting, pilgrim-followers of God.

A DISHONOR TO GOD'S LOVE

Penance is a false and blind substitute for repentance. It is misleading and mischievously opposed to the idea and fact of that free, full, immediate and unrevocable forgiveness by which true repentance is invariably followed. This, whether the penance take the form of wearing coarse clothes, ascetic abstinence from personal adornment, going barefoot, fasting, flagellation, or singularity of speech, dress or manners.

When the self-exiled, home-deserting son came to consider the great wrong he had been doing and had at last determined to do the best he could to make it right with his father, and when he went back and said frankly, "Father, I know that I have been doing wrong since I left you," what did the father say? Did he say, "My boy, you had good clothes on when you left home; here you are back in tatters. Wear your rags awhile longer that all may see what prodigality brings a young man to in the long run. Where is the ring I made you a present of at your last birthday? I buy no more jewelry for the pawn-shop. You went away well-shod; you come home barefoot. It will be a good reminder to go barefoot awhile longer. You always had a bountiful table to sit down at here at home. You ran yourself down and out until at last you had only husks to eat and only swine for

messmates, and nobody to care whether you ever had anything better or not. I prescribe for a few weeks, by way of probation, a diet of bread and water."

Was that the way the father did? For rags, instead, it was a robe, and that of the very best. For the empty hand that had been throwing husks to the swine, a ring. For the bare and bruised feet, shoes. For fasting, feasting; for gloom, gladness; for misery, merriment; for moans, music and dancing.

God give to these poor, hesitant, doubting, fearful hearts of ours to see deeper down than we have ever yet seen into the unsearchable depths of the Father's ever-welcoming, freely-forgiving, guilt-removing love.

WELCOME HOME

What the father would say or do to him in case he should return, the now penitent son did not know. But that was not for the son to consider. One thing he could do, and it was all he could do. He could go back to his father's house. One thing he could say, and it was all he could say: "Father, I have sinned." However it might turn out, he would do his part, leaving it to his father to do as he would.

Feeling as he did, I think that the son would have come back, even had he counted on being reproved and perhaps repulsed by his injured father. Certainly he was not prepared for the welcome that followed —the kiss, the ring, the best robe, the feast—all to express the father's gladness for his boy's return.

I think our Lord has given us these words so that

beyond the possibility of mistake we may know how true and strong and tender our Father's love is for us, and with what perfect confidence we may at all times come to him and especially in times of our greatest weakness and deepest need.

NO SECOND-BIRTH SUICIDE

Could we have known beforehand the pains and trials, the deceits and sins, the griefs and struggles of the world, we might, had the choice been given us and the capacity to exercise it, we might have chosen not to be born into it. At any rate, we know that "Would to God I had never been born," has been many a misanthrope's regret and many a suicide's despair.

True, the world into which the second birth introduces us has its conflicts too, but here the successful struggle is to rid ourselves of the sins, dangers and sorrows of the state into which we were first born. Who, born from above, has ever said, "Oh, that I had never been born that second time"? Who has ever heard of a second-birth suicide?

A HIDDEN DANGER

Civilization is deceptive. It gives the world a fairer outside, but it leaves the core of character untouched. Your modern Dives may wear a finer purple than the Dives of two thousand years ago. He may sit at a more sumptuous table and live in a costlier and more elegant mansion, and for all that be as selfishly, as

hard-heartedly, indifferent to the distress whose cry goes up daily at his gate. Magnificent rotundas, adorned with statues and paintings and surmounted by sky-piercing domes, are powerless to charm away corruption from our halls of legislation. Mercantile dishonesty is none the less hateful because enacted along burnished counters and under electric lights; lasciviousness, none the less loathsome because bedecked with the outside respectabilities of wealth, business distinction or public eminence. No veneering and no varnish that God does not pierce through to the dry rot of pride and unthankfulness beneath.

INTERCESSION FOR THE ILL-DESERVING

There was no very urgent reason, as men would say, why Abraham should interest himself particularly in the fate of Sodom, or even of his nephew who lived there. Were not the people of Sodom "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly"? Was not that city a plague-spot on God's fair earth, corrupted and corrupting, poisoned and poisoning, and would it not be every way better that such a sink of iniquity be cleansed by the potent disinfectants of brimstone and fire? And as for Lot, did he not, in utter disregard of what was due to the age and prior claim of his uncle, and taking mean advantage of his uncle's generosity, did he not choose the fertile valley of the Jordan for his own pasture-grounds and deliberately pitch his tent toward Sodom? And did he not, after that he had become thoroughly acquainted with the

pollutions of the town, did he not take his family there and make it his chosen residence? And would it not, then, have been a fitting recompense had his injured uncle left him to shift for himself as best he could in the coming overthrow?

That would indeed have been the way of the world —the spirit which leads the man who has attained all of rank, power and wealth which he desires, to leave his fellows to struggle alone with their temptations, hardships and dangers, and to excuse their own neglect by the heartless old plea, "Am I my brother's keeper? Things must take their course. It is no more than right that he suffer the consequence of his folly."

Abraham does better. His own affairs are indeed satisfactorily adjusted, his own interests are well looked after, his own safety is assured, his glory as founder of a great nation is fully guaranteed. Still he has more to ask. "He stands *yet* before the Lord." No sooner have the two men turned their faces toward the doomed city than he begins that humble, earnest, importunate intercession which has ever since been the guide and encouragement of God's people in their supplications for the worst of sinners.

SAVED

Never, since the world began, were there so many ways of pleasing, diverting and cultivating men as there are now. But, alas, for the hopes of mere humanitarians, God does not say, "Look unto me and be

ye diverted, pleased and entertained"; nor yet, "Look unto me and be ye cultured, polished and refined," but, "Look unto me and be ye saved." He does not say, "You are unfortunate, go to your friends and be pitied; you are ill-informed, go to books, lectures and teachers and be enlightened; you are tempted, consider the ruined and be admonished; you are fearful, lose yourself in business and forget; you are afflicted, consider that it is the common lot of all and be consoled." Above, and deeper than all this, and as the root from which all true comfort in affliction must come; out of which all spiritual enlightenment, all complete victory over temptation, all true, abiding peace must arise, "You are lost—look unto Me and be saved."

CREATED TO GOOD WORKS

By no possible strenuousness of endeavor could primeval chaos and night ever have worked themselves over and up into such a world as this which we see; a world of order, beauty and life. Much less could souls, darkened and disordered by sin, by however intense or prolonged a struggle, develop a spiritual cosmos of light and life from themselves. "Let there be light: let there be life," must first be spoken from above.

As our first and natural birth is our first, our natural beginning, so is our second, our spiritual birth, our first and new spiritual beginning. And just as it is not the infant's travail, but the mother's, that

brings the infant to its birth, so is it not by their own, but by the travail of Christ's "soul" that those are born who are born again.

Whatever "good works" we do, therefore, we do because we ourselves are "God's workmanship"; because we are "created" to do them—the works "ordained of God, that we should walk in them."

Hence,

"Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours,"

is the true order; and hence, again, the hopeless mistake of those who say:

"We, first, will kindle love divine,
And that, O Lord, shall kindle thine."

GROWING NOT TO GRACE, BUT IN IT

"Grace" is free giving. Not only the free forgiving of sins, but the free giving of spiritual life. And since life precedes and is an essential condition of growth, we are not bidden, as though we were *not* living, to grow *toward* and at length, perhaps, TO "grace and the knowledge of Christ"; but as those who have been "quickened" to this freely given spiritual life, to grow there-"IN."

SOMETHING TO EAT

A child of twelve years lay dead in her father's house. Jesus having come, He "commands that something be given her to eat."

But when does He command this? Not until that other word of command, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise," has restored supernaturally to the child's body its natural but death-interrupted power of nutrition. It were but mockery to offer to the dead anything in the way of food, however lovingly or skilfully it may have been prepared, no way having yet been devised or discovered by which the dead may eat their way back to life.

CLIMBING

Trying to reach heaven by mere stress of moral endeavor is very much like a "continuous performance" at climbing a rope. The climber is all the time either climbing or holding on. No wonder the strongest man should tire of doing that. He must perforce stop climbing now and then and rest—a most unsatisfactory rest, since it is almost as hard to hold on as it is to climb.

Faith is neither climbing nor holding on. It is not even holding on to Christ. It is dropping into Christ's arms and letting Christ hold *me*. I do not forget the beautiful picture of the female figure clinging to a cross set on a rock in mid-ocean, nor the legend accompanying it, "Teneo et Teneor" (I hold and am held). The order, however, is a mistaken one. The motto should read, "Teneor et Teneo" (I am held and I hold).

THE SPIDER'S FOOT FOR THE SPIDER'S WEB

While its web means swift and safe transit for the spider, it bodes only hindrance and peril for the fly. The fly does, indeed, seem for a time to be the more active of the two, but the activity is of a wholly different sort. For while the fly struggles, the spider glides.

Stretched between earth and heaven is the wide web of our human life; a web intricately woven with the interlacing threads of duty and devotion, of trial and temptation. In the meshes of this web the clumsy foot of self-righteousness becomes discouragingly and hopelessly entangled, while for the nimble arachnoid foot of faith it serves as a smooth track on which the steadfast believer glides safely to heaven.

THE ONE THING THAT COUNTS

What is there a thoughtful man would not do, so the doing of it would ensure his being dealt with by God as one absolutely free from guilt? Will praying, fasting, weeping count for this? Then he will pray, fast and weep. Will money offerings count, whether for the poor or for the support and spread of the Gospel? For the furtherance of these or kindred objects he will, if need be, "bestow all his goods." Will a constant and careful study of the Scriptures count? To that task he will most earnestly

address himself; will, if necessary, get the entire Bible by heart. Will regular and punctual attendance on church services count; taking the "Endeavorers'" pledge; the doing of Y. M. C. A. work; exhorting, preaching, offering himself for missionary work at home or abroad? Whatever of all this he has reason to think would improve his chances of winning pardon and eternal life, that he will be forward to do.

Yet he may do all of this and still fail of eternal life. He may do nothing of it and yet be saved.

On the inside walls of any and every Christian church the things named above might, as mottoes, be most appropriately inscribed: as, "Pray without ceasing"; "And thou, when thou fastest"; "Night and day with tears"; "To communicate forget not"; "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together"; "Do good unto all men"; "Preach the gospel to every creature."

Were I, however, asked to suggest a motto suitable to be inscribed over the entrance-portal of every Christian church, it would be this: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly, his *believing* is counted for righteousness."

College catalogues distinguish carefully between the terms of admission and the work to be done by the candidate after matriculation. In the divinely authorized and perennial catalogue of the Christian church the sole and invariable condition set down for admission is this simple trust in Him who was "delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification."

NOT "IT," BUT "I"

Had God undertaken to give to the world a knowledge of any natural science, He would have given it with such clearness and fulness as to make any differing or opposing declaration irreverent presumption. No twentieth century electrician could make an honorable reputation for himself by attempting to disprove or alter any statement which God might have chosen, however long ago, to make regarding electricity.

Of ethical principles and practices it did please God to give to the world just such a clear, concise and complete statement; not on parchment, to decay, but on stone, to endure; not tentative, but final, since it is significantly said, "And He added no more." The age in which Jesus lived, although in other respects far more enlightened than was the age of Moses, had not, nevertheless, outgrown that two-articled code of supreme love to God and equal love to our neighbor. Moses was still good enough Sabbath-day reading for the synagogues, built more than three thousand years after that twofold formula was given; and so far as mere ethical instruction is concerned, he is good enough either Sabbath-day or week-day reading for synagogue, church, cathedral, class-room or closet to-day. The Two Tables were but the pattern of the eternal legislation brought down from heaven and showed to Moses in the Mount. A complete angelic and archangelic bible, they would serve as a

complete human bible, as well, did men, like angels, live fully up to its requirements. Any perfect man's bible, if such perfect man there be, is a bible of but fifteen verses; epitomized, of but a single verse.

"If such there be"; but what for such of us as are not perfect, and have grown weary of trying to be so?

A knowledge of anatomy and hygiene answers very well for the man who breaks no bones and is never sick. But for the man who is not "whole," anatomy and hygiene are no longer the "way." For them the physician is the way. What a sick man needs is not a rule, but a person—not the laws of health, however perfect, but one who shall come to save him from the consequences of having broken them. Hence Jesus never said, "It," but always "I." "I am the way." Not, "Go to it"—the law—but "Come, ye weary, unto Me."

THE ONE TEMPTATION

Christians have, comprehensively, but one temptation to resist and overcome. Jesus had but one—the temptation to put some other thing or things before love. "See," said Satan, "what a noise you will make in the world if by a word you turn these stones into bread; what a greater noise still if you leap from this temple-top and are caught in mid-air by rescuing angels; and greatest of all if you become, what I will make you, possessor and sole monarch of all the kingdoms of the world."

"No," answers Jesus; "on no such showily-ambitious errand have I come. Miracles, indeed, I shall work; miracles, too, far greater than turning stones into bread, or than that of being caught and upborne by the hands of descending angels, or even of commanding in a moment of time the submissive homage of all the kingdoms of the earth. Hearts of flint I will turn into hearts of flesh. Angels will attend Me, but it will not be as the imposing retinue of an earthly king, but only that they may minister to the weakness, pain and sorrow incident to the working out of my consuming purpose of love in the world's redemption. A crown of dominion I shall wear, but of dominion exercised in furtherance of love's most loving behests."

The ambition of the prince of this world is to out-hoard, to out-do, and to out-shine; and in order to do this, to out-manœuvre and out-wit; if need be, to out-fight and out-kill. The ambition of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is to out-love, to out-give, to out-bless, and to out-save. He is the world's Saviour in that He stands unwaveringly, unfalteringly and fully for this. So far as His professed followers stand uncompromisingly for this, are they recognized as such by the world. "By this," said the Master, "shall all men know." He saves His people from all their sins by saving them from this one generic, all-inclusive sin and mistake of putting this, that or the other thing or things before love. No, not business for business' sake, or money for money's sake, art for

art's sake, learning for learning's sake, or dominion for dominion's sake; but business, riches, art, education, power or position; yes, the more of them the better, so they are gained, held and used as ministering hand-maids of grateful, responsive, out-going and out-giving love.

Heaven is as full of love as it can hold. We are here a good way from that as yet. But we are coming to it, however slowly. We know that we shall come to it wholly one of these days, and that our Lord's prayer, and our, His people's prayer, will surely be fulfilled, "On earth as it is in heaven."

QUITTING HIS OBSERVATORY

His observatory is not the astronomer's home. He is interested, is absorbed for a time in his transit, his equatorial, his meridional circle, spectroscope, astronomical clock, and other instruments. He spends the whole night with them, it may be. When the day dawns he is glad to quit the dome for his home, the stars for the sun, silent contemplation of the heavens for the companionship of wife, children and friends.

The eye is but a telescope. We use it for noting what is going on in the world about us. The body is the observatory in which it is mounted for convenience of observation. We use it during the starlight of our stay on the earth. When the clear day of heaven dawns, we are glad to leave instrument and observa-

tory behind us and to join our friends in that home which has no need of sun, moon or stars to lighten it—that city whose gates are not shut at all by day, and where there is no night.

III

A NEW CHIME OF OLD BELLS

Going to service one Sunday morning, I was seized with a pleasurable surprise as all of a sudden the city bells rang out with the accord of their joyous tones. Subdued and blended by the intervening hillside, some notes as of a familiar church-tune came to my ear. Is it the "Reformed" or "Trinity," I at once asked myself, that has so quietly during the past week put a new chime into its old bell-tower? Listening more intently I soon distinguished the sounds of the individual bells of the different churches. My next thought was, What, after all, if the bells of adjacent churches were really tuned in groups and rung as a chime? Some by preconcerted arrangement pealing forth notes for the line, "How pleased and blest was I"; others taking up the refrain, "To hear the people cry"; and others following with, "Come, let us seek our God to-day." Such a united call from all the churches, what a delightful sense would it give of the oneness of all Christians in worship if not in creed!

NEIGHBORLINESS NEXT TO GODLINESS

Wholly taken up with the decent semblance of religion, formalism ignores morality. Fancying that

God is pleased with the shows of outward worship, the over-devout formalist feels himself at liberty to treat his fellow-men with a rudeness or injustice which upright, though perhaps prayerless persons would scorn to commit. Hence that unseemly yoking together of strenuous piety with sickening depravity which our Lord so aptly describes as "straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel."

The men thus satirized by Christ were a set of religionists who maintained that a man might keep the first table of the law so punctiliously that he need not keep the second table at all; might serve God so devoutly that he could without blame hate men as cordially as he pleased; who imagined that they could so hoodwink God by bribes and flattery that He would care little whether or how much they abused their neighbors. Making the law of no effect through their traditional glosses and false interpretations, where their lives did not fit God's pattern they changed the pattern to fit their lives—strangling the law under show of embracing it.

In strongest opposition to these Pharisaic notions the Bible everywhere puts morality before what is generally termed piety; doing right before praying; duty to our fellow-men before direct duties to God. Even in the Old Testament God made it to be clearly understood that He cares nothing for religious forms in themselves. "I have," He says, "forms and offerings enough of my own, if that were what I wanted. The beasts of the forest are mine, and the cattle on

a thousand hills. If I were hungry I would not tell thee. . . . Offer unto the Lord the sacrifices of righteousness." "Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." "Make all right with your fellow-men, and after that I will make all right with you."

In the New Testament the teaching is the same; only if possible more full and emphatic. It was by such preaching that John prepared the people to receive Christ. When told of Christ's coming and how important it was that they should be ready to receive Him, the people "asked Him saying, What shall we do then?"

"He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat let him do likewise."

"Then came also publicans to be baptized and said to Him, Master, what shall we do?"

"Exact no more than that which is appointed you."

"And the soldiers likewise demanded of Him, saying, And what shall we do?"

"Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

Thus was a pure and honorable morality the trumpet by which the coming of Jesus was heralded to the world.

AN UNWELCOME GIFT

Our Lord taught nothing more pointedly than that unneighborly acts are a complete bar to acceptable worship.

"First, be reconciled to thy brother." You have come bringing a gift to the altar of worship; to render praise, offer thanksgiving, seek forgiveness for your sins, drop money into the Lord's treasury. Before bending your knees in adoration, singing your hymn or making your contribution, you think of some unrighted wrong done to a neighbor—unpaid debt, unfair bargain, rude discourtesy, tale-bearing, kindness repaid by neglect, pretext of injury received when you were yourself the injurer. What Jesus would have the very first sight of His altar do for you, the intending worshipper, is to quicken remembrance of wrongs which it has hitherto been convenient for you to forget. What would He have you do? Go on with your worship? No; "Leave there thy gift before the altar." Leave it before the altar, but do not put it on the altar. It is a defiled gift, and will not be accepted. Let the prayer go unsaid, the psalm go unsung, the money stay awhile in thy purse. You have come to make your acknowledgments to God; but there are other acknowledgments which are more important just now, and which He says you must make first or He will not accept those made to Himself. First, be reconciled to thy brother. God wants the first table of the law kept, but not at the expense of the second. He would not suffer broken tables to be put into His ark nor to be brought into His sanctuary. Whole tables must be brought in or none. What is technically called "religion"; prayer, thanksgiving, confession, are good; but they are not good,

they are worse than useless if disjoined from a high-toned, right-minded, honorable treatment of our fellow-men. Unless wrong done to our neighbor be righted, devotion of whatever kind is of absolutely no account whatever in the sight of God. That wronged brother is also a child of God; and would you as a father smile on the man who has done some grievous wrong to your child and who leaves the wrong unacknowledged? What would that be but to wink at the indignity and outrage?

It may be that some who are not Christians are saying to themselves, "That is what I like; that is a comfort to me." I am glad if you like it and glad if it is a comfort to you; although I did not say it for that, but because it is true. It *is* a comfort to any man that he is not mean, selfish, or underhanded in his treatment of his fellows. It is a comfort to be tenderly, honestly, nobly mindful of the rights, good name, prosperity, and happiness of one's neighbors. And there are men out of the church as well as in the church who have this stamp of nobility and honor.

We say to such men, You are on the right road; but you have by no means completed your journey. You need to be devout towards God as well as upright towards men.

To the offender against morality Jesus does indeed say, "Put not thy gift on the altar." He does *not* say, "Take away from the altar thy gift." "Leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First, be

reconciled to thy brother"; but there is a second; "Then come and offer thy gift."

This explains in what sense morality is more important than piety. Here is an old stubble field, and I would sow it to wheat. Which is more important to be done first, sowing or plowing? Plowing certainly, since without that the sowing would be labor lost. But I do not stop with the plowing. So Jesus says we must not stop with the strictest morality. If everything is right in the home, in the office, shop and store, in society, then I may go to Christ about my personal relations with Him. From the altar thus revisited I shall bear away the inward consolation of an accepted gift.

A FOOTPATH VENTURE

"Good evening," I said to a gentleman whom I overtook, a little ago, as I was returning from our mid-week evening prayer-meeting.

"We are strangers," I continued, "but after all, we are neighbors in a way, and if you don't mind, I would like to tell you of a new thought that has just come to me."

This was quite unconventional, of course. I knew also that it was a venture, and that the familiarity of my address might be resented as an impertinent intrusion.

The stranger's prompt reply, "Certainly. I would be glad to hear it," proved my warrant for having taken the risk.

"Well," I said, "you know how much is being said nowadays about 'success' in lectures, magazines, newspapers and books. 'What is "success"?' I have been asking myself; and I have come to define it as 'The doing of that which I set out to do.' If I do what I set out to do, I succeed. All depends, then, on what I set out to do. Should I set out to fly to the moon, or to become a multi-millionaire, President of the United States, or a super-Shakespearian poet, I should be in the one case so sure, and in the others so likely, to fail, that it would be wiser for me not to try. Should I set out to out-gain, to out-build, out-furnish, out-speed, out-dress, out-bejewel, or, in any other way, outshine some envied and emulated society-star, possibly I might make it out, but the chances would be so much against me that it were safer to attempt something more promising of success.

"My new thought is, that there is a kind of success which every one who cares for it may have. It is this.

"Everywhere are persons in need of help—poverty to be relieved, sorrow to be comforted, despondency to be cheered, faint-heartedness to be encouraged, doubts to be cleared, faltering and uncertain steps to be led, loneliness longing for heart-felt companionship. Of such are always those who will gratefully accept offered assistance. If, then, what I set out to do is to render such relief, I am bound to succeed—a most true, worthy, and heart-satisfying success."

Possibly, the most which I had any right to expect

in the way of rejoinder would have been a polite stranger's quiet tolerance of a perhaps ill-timed and ill-placed homily. Instead of that came at once this genial response.

"I agree with you, in both principle and practice. I am myself one of a Society to relieve the poor of the city of Boston. We do it by family visitation. We have divided the city into sections. My section contains 15,000 inhabitants. My work is to find out those in my district who are in need and to relieve them. We make no distinction as to race or creed." A grand success, certainly.

Two practical applications.

1. Running the risk of an unsocial repulse may issue in the happy discovery of a wholly unlooked-for nobility of character.

2. While priding ourselves on having formulated what we are supposing to be a new original theory of life, likely as not we may encounter those; not only

"Whose faith, through form, is pure as ours";

but more than that, those

"Whose hands are quicker unto good."

WEANED

The mother perseveres in weaning her child, because she knows what the child does not know, that it is for the child's best good. In her secret wisdom

she appeals from the infant callow to the infant fledged. The crying, the struggling, the clamorous insisting would, she is sure, cease at once, could the rebellious little one only be made to understand *to* what as well as from what it is being weaned—from one single and confined source and way of satisfying its hunger to the numberless and diversified sources and ways which love will provide for the increasing demands of its appetite and growth. She foresees, too, how thankfully the now insubmissive nursling will, in due time, approve the kind compulsion which breaks it off from the old ways and starts it upon the new.

So far as true learning has outgrown its babyhood, it has come about only through a long succession of enforced and reluctantly accepted weanings. With what infantile pertinacity have philosophers and physicists, pedagogues and politicians, dogmatists and doctrinaires clung to their prematurely-formed and ambitiously-announced speculations—whole centuries of weaning taken up in the making of an astronomer out of an astrologer, of a chemist out of an alchemist, of a statesman out of a politician; out of a translator a reviser, and out of a religious dogmatist a true theologian!

After all, what in its deepest import is all this weaning but a sensible giving up of that pride of reason which boasts itself equal to the quick fathoming of "all mysteries and all knowledge" in exchange for that humility which acknowledges the bounds which nature has set to the triumphs of the human

understanding; for that modesty which led Newton to compare himself to the little child picking up a pebble here and there, on the shore of the vast ocean of truth; which brings a highly-honored chemist to confess that an eighty years' siege by Prout's hypothesis has thus far failed to capture the "citadel of the atom"; which has caused many an abashed Temanite, Shuhite and Naamathite to give up trying to solve the time-old problems of the origin of evil, the prosperity of the wicked and the afflictions of the righteous; which voices the meek surrender of the once proud but now submissive Psalmist: "Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

TWO SUMMERS

Looking out in the dead of winter over his snow-imprisoned acres, the farmer (but that he has been otherwise instructed by experience) might exclaim despairingly, "What can I do to be saved from threatened hunger and starvation? To melt this forbidding mass of snow and ice is beyond my most earnest and toilsome endeavor. Were I even to cut and burn a hundred forests, the mighty hecatomb would not suffice to warm the soil or quicken the seed or ripen the harvest on a single field."

True. But coming already on its way is the summer; God's loving offer of help to His children in their mortal need, and ready, otherwise, to perish.

His offer accepted, on what a scene of rejoicing activity does the Father look complacently down—a million plows turning the soil on hillsides and in valleys, by great rivers and on boundless prairies; harvests shouted home by myriads of exultant reapers; happy households gathered around bountifully spread tables; the great globe's teeming population kept alive and saved.

What of the unspeakably greater good to be secured for the soul? How supply *its* famishing hunger with the bread of life?

"Looking at my heart and life," says one, "I behold a scene more wild and desolate than snow-wrapped fields; more despairingly enchained by more than Arctic frosts of pride, covetousness, envy, worldly ambition, self-righteousness and unbelief. Though art, taste, refinement and philosophy were to kindle all their fires and compass me with all their brilliant and crackling flames, they could not thaw the icy impenitence of my soul; could not cause to spring one holy desire or ripen one holy act."

True, again. But if God give one summer for the life of the body, "how much more" will He give another for the life of the soul!

Shall I be forever deploring, then, as though it were a just cause or excuse for despondency, that *unless* some all-powerful Friend undertake for me, I can

never repent, believe, and love unto salvation and eternal life?

From all such deprecatory and despairing negatives God's full provision and loving promise bid me wholly and at once to break away; bid me leap, rather, to say with most grateful though most humble positiveness, "Without Christ I could indeed do nothing, but such is not my case. I *have* Christ and with Him I can do all things."

PERFECT AT LAST

The schoolboy's crooked up-and-down strokes on the first page of his copy-book are to the onlooker an almost ludicrous contrast to the finely engraved model above; a discouraging contrast, no doubt, to the pupil himself. The last line on the page shows a noticeable, perhaps, but still very distant approach to the perfect strokes at the top. Yet through each successive page the improvement continues until at the end of the many-leaved book is a line of which the pleased and patient master is pleased to say, "That, my boy, is as well done as I could have done it myself."

"Perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" is no mere tantalizing theory, no impossible command. There have been heart-heroes who have said, "It shall be done," and who have done it. Paul does not encourage or excuse any half-hearted "beating of the air" by saying, "I am trying hard as ever I can to keep my body under." He keeps it under. Stephen does not try merely to keep his temper be-

fore the prejudiced and persecuting council with its suborned false witnesses. He keeps it; keeps it perfectly. When at length he feels the thud of the cruel stones, his "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" is a perfect echo of the "Father, forgive them" of Him who had felt the thrust of the cruel spear.

Our trying is a poor trying enough at first, but our faith being fuller of force than our trying is of faults, we do not give over until at length we succeed so well that the Master smiles upon us an approving and rewarding, "I could Myself have done it no better."

AN ORIGINAL GUEST

No matter how elaborate or abundant such an entertainment as that of the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee might be in other particulars; in one particular there must be no failure—the wine must not give out. But it begins to be apparent at a certain stage of that banquet that it is likely to break down in that, as it was then regarded, most important part. An ill-natured guest would have said unkind things about the slenderness of the provision. Deeply concerned for the reputation of the bridegroom and his friends, Mary applies to Jesus to help them out of their difficulty. He kindly supplies what is lacking. He not only by his presence approves and encourages the enjoyment of the occasion, but he takes up the feast when it is likely to fail and makes it a success. He

rescues the banquet from the reproach which would otherwise have been sure to follow and makes it honorable. He saves the feast from a mortifying decline and prolongs it in undiminished credit and enjoyment to the end.

In its beginning the world's entertainment promises well. "Every man at the beginning sets forth that which is good." Everything is bright and sparkling to the young. Every relation, enterprise and occupation promises well at the start. Every new home gives promise of contentment and of pure and growing affection. Every scheme, ordinance or system devised by men for their common protection, improvement or happiness is full of hope in its beginning. The founders of dynasties, governments and institutions are grandly optimistic. But who can say that affairs may not take so disastrous a turn as to justify the forebodings of the most gloomy pessimist? Heraclitus bewailed with weeping the wickedness of men; Democritus jeered at their follies. But the tears of the one and the laughter of the other spoke alike the failure of men in their search for a happiness that should not only satisfy, but endure.

Jesus redeems life from this failure. He saves it from the laughter of fools on the one hand, and from the sneers of cynics on the other. He keeps it from becoming either tragedy or comedy. He takes up the feast where the guests were ready to abandon it in disgust or despair, prolongs it with honor and makes it a success. With Christ in his heart, no man

need ever outlive any true enjoyment of the world. Christ in the heart keeps pure and fresh the Christian's love for nature, for his friends, for society, for literature, science and art. He that loves the Bible keeps relish for all good books. He that takes Christ with him finds unabated enjoyment in all rational social festivity. The Christian is no complainer, no misanthropist, morose and soured with the world. He enjoys life more and longer than he does or can who has not Christ for a friend and fellow-guest. Christ is staying power to the spirit. The Christian outstays the worldling, even at the world's own banqueting table.

VARNISH AND VITALITY

Once, in a dry time in summer, I brought out my hose to dash with water the vines of the honeysuckle clustered about the posts and railing of the front porch, and where, therefore, they were seen by all. A minute's showering sufficed to give to the dry and dusty leaves a June freshness and brightness. A vain and superficial vine would be quite satisfied with this, failing to consider how transient this freshening and brightening must be, and how soon the dull and dry look will come back, to be gotten rid of again only by repeated artificial affusion. A thoughtful vine would entreat, " Send the water plentifully about my roots, and I will gloss my own leaves with a lustre that will stay. They shall not only seem to be of a brilliant

green, they shall be really so, made lustrous, not by momentary dashes of water from without, but by the energy of vivifying sap from within."

1. Here lies the difference between communism and the methods and rewards of individual industry and enterprise. Shower the communist with a rain of gold. That will give him for a time the appearance of a man of force and thrift. But it will be an appearance only. The brightness of content and comfort will soon fade, and to renew it the idler and vagabond must be periodically regilt. The honest man, the manly man, says, on the contrary, "Keep your varnish for knaves and paupers. What I want, and all I want, is a chance for the exertion of my powers. Give me materials with which to work, and a chance to work, and I will provide my own comforts—will build my own house, buy my own clothes, and set my own table."

2. Here, too, is the difference between mere *im*pression and self-*ex*pression by means of ordinances of worship and of instruction in Christian truth. Dry and sapless, fruitless and flowerless people, get themselves freshened up by attendance on enlivening religious services—fine singing and eloquent preaching. But this is spasmodic and periodical. The water of affusion soon dries off, and the momentary vividness fades into the dryness and deadness of the old worldliness. Only that is felt which comes down on their passive minds from without. Living souls, on the other hand, receive the truth of Christ into their in-

most hearts, to reappear in the abiding freshness and beauty of a steadfastly holy life.

APART AND IN SECRET

To get the most and the best out of a heap of grain, the grain must, first of all, be scattered. The sower is a separator. He is also a concealer. Let him keep his seed-corn always in the open, and let him deal with it only by the bagful, and how plentiful a crop will he be likely to get out of it? That, too, however lively a shaking up he might now and then give to the bag!

This close companionship must, instead, be broken up for a time in order that each separate seed may have in secret its own little dark cell of earth whence its individual life may spring forth, and where it may be individually nourished—the seeds thus scattered soon to be reassembled, it is true, but in what a more fruitful and therefore more glorious fashion! Instead of being grouped passively together, they now stand together in joyous harvesting array, offering to a hungry and waiting world some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred-fold of life in return for the life they have themselves received.

In our growing fondness for huge evangelical assemblies, is there a possible danger lest the religion of Jesus be pressed for acceptance in too impersonal a way as the religion for the world at large, and as a consequence it be lost sight of, that it is, to begin with, for each and every one of us as individuals, most

simple in its essence and precisely the same for all, whatever the age, the sex, the race or the condition?

But did not Jesus call together and address the multitudes? Yes, but not as multitudes. Most careful was He to individualize them. He said "thou," and "thy." He made it the privilege and duty of each and every one to hold separate, trustful, loving communion with his Heavenly Father; "And thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray." This "thou" of our Lord applies just as truly to Chinaman, Filipino, African, Indian or South Sea Islander as it does to the most enlightened of worshippers in the most Christian of lands.

Is it not here that we have the real ground and guaranty for the much-sought-for church unification, rather than in the increasing frequency or bulk of ecclesiastical, humanitarian, or theological councils, conferences or convocations? The Master's closet of secret prayer is the true equalizer, the surest antidote against race prejudice and class separation; the one perfect and blessed unifier of those who thus pray, as loved and loving children of the one common Father of them all.

And what glorious congregations we are yet to have—brethren thus in heart as well as in name—what wider and nobler companionship of souls made ripe for Christian fellowship and strong for Christian work when to our great assemblies each one shall come with a love that has been quickened to a new

upspringing, fruit-bearing activity in that dearest and most sacred of all places of heavenly communion—the closet of secret prayer.

VULTURE AND DOVE

So distinctively is the spirit of God a spirit of peace and confiding gentleness that the dove, which is its emblem, takes readily by symbolic fitness to the care and protection of men. Secure in the house prepared for it, though it be one of unbarred door and open windows, it neither fears nor suspects harm, as it has no wish or thought of harming others.

But is not this gentle, peaceable, confiding disposition a constant menace to its very existence? Does it not make the dove an easy victim of all ravenous birds of prey, leaving it utterly without defence against the grasping claw and tearing beak of hawk, eagle, and vulture? Must not their crafty rapacity always prove more than a match for its unwary weakness? And must not it and all its kind, therefore, in time, wholly perish and, through "survival of the fittest," leave to the fierce, the unscrupulous and the devouring full possession of the field?

The drift of things indicates already, and God is pledged to show, one of these days, beyond all further doubt or discussion, what that is which *He* judges fittest to survive—whether the meek, the gentle and the lowly, or that which from its stealthy perch watches for a sure moment in which to swoop down, seize, bear away and destroy. The success of hawks

and vultures lies only in keeping themselves at a safe distance from the home-enclosures of men. Yet are they not by any means, as they complacently imagine, beyond reach always of the fowler's eye or marksman's ball. And when, struck at last by the avenging bolt, the disturber and destroyer tumbles from his proud eyrie, none are sorry and all are glad.

Year by year we see the noxious, even in nature, driven back within ever-narrowing circles, presaging its utter and final extinction. It may still have further lease of existence, but on one condition only—that it stop hurting; that it cease betraying the unsuspecting and harming the helpless. There are chances ahead for the despot who shall see his mistake and be done with his despotism; for the envious, the malicious, the discourteous, the covetous, who shall quit their envy, their malice, their discourtesies and their greed. The asp and the cockatrice may survive, provided they no longer shoot poison from fang and eye, and so become harmless playmates of the little child. The "bear" may survive, if he can make up his mind to feed peaceably "with the cow," and the "lion," if he will learn to "eat straw like the ox."

More and more relentless and persistent must pursuit to the death be of all wrong, outrage and injustice against even the weakest, most uncomplaining and unresisting of our fellows—the pursuit kept up unfalteringly till the last unrepenting tyrant and tormenter shall, with the last viper and vulture, have perished from the earth.

In that good time coming the meek shall flourish and shall possess the land. When those who have kept themselves apart from their fellows in the selfish seclusions of place and power shall have been brought low, then shall room, and honor, and power, and plenty be given to the lowly.

The fittest will survive. No vulture to vex longer the freedom of the upper sky, the whole wide air shall thenceforward be safe and shall everywhere be winnowed only by the soft wings of peace.

THE LOWER ENNOBLED BY THE HIGHER

We are not necessarily low-lived although we be ever so keenly alive to that which is low. To be low-lived is to be satisfied with that which is low. It is not his fondness for eating that makes the glutton. It is that eating is what he most cares for and lives for. The enthusiastic student enjoys the pleasures of a well-spread table, and enjoys them none the less, but rather more, because of his fondness for study. Be his relish for books never so keen, he is still not in the least ashamed to boast that he has a good appetite and a good cook.

Yet, let the student, also, beware. Is he so wholly given to study that he begins to care less and less for his friends? Has the young man or woman away at school or college found home-love dying out of his or her heart? To that extent, then, is he or she low-lived. It was of such a one, a favorite daughter, that

a sorrowful father once said to me, "True, I have gained a scholar, but I have lost a child!"

There is the like warning, too, for fathers and mothers—for fathers so devoted to business, club-life, or politics; for mothers so surrendered to the exactions of social or even philanthropic ambition as to justify the children's lament; "True, we have gained a captain of industry, finance, letters or art; true, we have gained a society-star, but we have lost a father, a mother, and a home." To the extent of such parental neglect, such husbands, wives, fathers and mothers are low-lived. It is but a kind of self-degradation; the sacrificing of a higher form of life to a lower.

Not that there is in this the least implied censure of any sort whatever of worldly ambition, enterprise or success. God is Himself the greatest of legislators and rulers, of farm, forest and mine proprietors; of geometricians, architects and artists. Take a good look at Solomon in all his glory, and then consider God's lilies. He likes to see His children, made in His own image, till farms, develop mines, plan great engineering works, build dwelling-houses, warehouses, ships, halls of legislation, justice, science and art. "Every house is built by some man." This is all secular, indeed; but it is, or should be, much more than that. There is, or should be, a sacredness in it all. Such sacredness there is for the builder who reverently considers that "He who made all things is God"; and that among the "all things" is the

builder Himself. The crown and radiance of the whole world's business ambition and enterprise is this filial recognition of the Father's love. Let this thankful acknowledgment be wanting, and God may well complain, "True, I have gained a husbandman, an engineer, an architect, a jurist, a statesman, a general, an orator, a financier, an artist, a scholar; but, alas, I have lost a child!"

The worldling is he to whom the world is all and all. And herein is the world's sin.

"ISMS" AND "ISTS"

1. When used as a suffix to a person's name, as in "Platonism," "Cæsarism," "Cobdenism," "Mohammedanism," "ism" denotes certain opinions (usually in philosophy, economics or religion) first given by such person to the world; and "ist" one who makes such opinions his own, although perhaps without the zeal of an advocate in their propagation.

2. Other "isms" are simply and impersonally declarative of opinions, as "deism," "monotheism," "socialism," "agrarianism."

3. Others imply the attaching of undue and one-sided importance to a sentiment or system in itself lawful and good; as "despotism," ruling for the sake of ruling, the governed for the governor instead of the governor for the governed, the ship for the rudder instead of the rudder for the ship. Or, as "fanaticism"—uncharitable fury uncontrolled by reason in the advocacy of opinion.

4. In other cases still "ism" means simply either the denying and repudiating of certain systems or assertions, as "nihilism," having nothing to do with civil government; "atheism," having nothing to do with God; or merely professed ignorance as to the truth of certain tenets or beliefs, as "agnosticism."

There are, therefore, both good "isms" and bad. What Truth and Right aim at is either the enlightening of blind "isms" and "ists," or the expanding to something broader and more comprehensive of that which is narrow and contracted.

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

Some of the most fruitful Sunday-school work anywhere done has been done in log-cabin settlements in the distant West. Now, with our luxuriously-appointed churches, chapel and Sunday-school rooms, well-filled libraries, "lesson-helps" without number, and fine vocal and instrumental music, why are such meagre spiritual results so much debated and deplored?

More than a place to work in, tools to work with and materials to work up, is the workman himself. The place may be a poor one, the tools scanty and rude, the materials unpromising, yet a workman whose heart is thoroughly in his work may have more to show for it in the end than another, although in every respect better equipped, but who having no clear and earnest aim is satisfied with simply going through the prescribed motions.

The most devoted and conscientious teachers and preachers are the ones who most fully realize and who most dread the danger of professionalism in their work—the danger, in other words, of being satisfied with simply going through the motions. So much easier is formalism than spiritual fidelity, that with those not thus heartily and prayerfully devoted to their work, the mistake most likely to be made is that of devising and organizing some new motions to be gone through with.

THE FIRST AND SECOND BIRTHS

To attain completeness of body or mind we need, so far as mere capability is concerned, but the growing life-energy with which we are born. The infant's brain, hand and foot are already perfect, save in size, and in due time as a simple matter of course complete size will also be attained. Once made, the child does not need to be re-made. Samson needed not to be born again in order that he might pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple; or Cleopatra, to become the most beautiful woman of her time; or Angelo, to excel in architecture; or La Place, in astronomy; Beethoven in music, or Webster, in law, eloquence and statesmanship.

"Is this little boy of yours well up in mathematics, chemistry, physics or mental and moral science?" "No," answers the father, "he is too young yet, but I am expecting him to grow to it all one of these days.

Time and study will do it. They will of themselves be the making of him as a scholar and a man."

Is the like true of the spiritual in us? Some there are who say so; some who deny both the fact and the need of spiritual regeneration; maintaining, as they do, that here also generation is enough; that in the first birth spiritual growth and completeness are potentially given; that we are at birth as truly alive spiritually as we are physically and mentally; that just as a child needs but to be introduced at the right age to each of the different studies of his course, in order that he may grasp and enjoy them, so will he, in due course of development, come just as naturally and just as surely to understand, enjoy and practically apply moral and spiritual truth; that beholding in His Works and Word the glory of God, he will be changed gradually into the same image; not by the "Spirit of the Lord," but by the naturally assimilative power of his own spirit.

Some people's prospects for heaven would undoubtedly, so it seems to us at least, be vastly improved could they only be born again in that literal sense in which Nicodemus took the declaration of Jesus—born, that is, of better parents who would give to their second childhood better teaching and greater encouragements to right living and with fewer things to lead them astray. But since by even such a second birth as that Nicodemus could not in his own estimation have "stood fairer for the Kingdom of God than as a born Israelite he already stood," Jesus at

once explains to him the spiritual nature of the new birth; declares the need of it to be universal; sweeps away at a breath the idea of the sufficiency in order to salvation of all mere human endeavor; asserts in the most clear and positive way that what men need for the attainment of righteousness is not any new philosophy of life, but a new life; that not one, even of the most naturally favored of men, can grow for himself a new heart, which must ever be a free gift from above, and that no man, unless re-born of water and the Spirit, can "enter" or even "see" the kingdom of God.

Authority on a great matter like this, for those who accept it as supreme and final, precludes further speculation, questioning or debate. Having fullest confidence in Jesus as "a teacher sent from God," Nicodemus, with becoming modesty and humility, yields his acknowledged Master's right to choose his own topic and to lead in the conversation. "Hear ye Him" is the most reasonable command for all such as have first accepted as from heaven that other declaration, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

UNUSED SPICES

Love is love, however blind or mistaken its methods. Were the "spices" which the Marys and the "others with them" brought to the sepulchre, in sorrowing love for their buried Lord, less odorous or precious because not needed?

Our careful and costly preparations for doing some special work for the Master may turn out to have been utterly wasted. We find things to be quite the opposite of what we expected. Health gives out at the very moment of intended action; or, through unlooked-for reverses, the means fail just at the last for doing what we had set our hearts on accomplishing. The devoted Lowrie goes down in the Bay of Bengal with the ship which is nearing the land, to bless which with his missionary labors he had made long and expensive preparation.

A father has planned to give the best education he can to an only son; but the son dies on the very threshold of his educational career. The father's generous hands are stayed and held.

In what strange perplexities are we thus sometimes overwhelmingly plunged! How inscrutable God's dealings with us and ours!

But not always, and not for long, does the Father mean that His children shall be kept in harrowing suspense, nor long be balked in the expression of their love. Men, in shining garments, appear to the baffled and wondering disciples with words of explanation, of promise and of larger hope. The love of these faithful disciples shall find expression still—only in higher, purer and more joyous ways. How much better, heart-satisfying worship of a risen and ever-living Saviour, than spices, however odorous and costly, for a dead and buried Christ!

It may be, instead, that the way to our intended

work proves to be more open to us than we had at first thought. We may find the stone rolled away for us—an obstacle removed we could not have ourselves surmounted—so that we can enter more quickly, even than we had supposed, the field of our purposed deed of love. But then the field itself we find to be altogether abandoned. That on which we were about to bestow our labor is gone; we know not whither.

A mother makes a long and tedious journey to see a sick child, taking with her carefully-prepared gifts for her child's relief and comfort. But she has no sooner come than she is told that her child is no longer living. What now of the gifts, of which her loving hands are full? The dear one, on whom she is ready to bestow them, is no longer here to receive them.

With God, motive governs and determines the reward. The motive right and pure, lamented mistakes turn always, in the end, to joyous surprises.

What became of those first Sunday's spices? They have a precious existence still. Although unused, yet, like the spikenard, that *was* used before His burial, they at once took on the power of living and most persuasive speech. "Wherever this Gospel is preached," with what a tongue do they tell even us of the ignorance and unbelief of our sorrow, and of the greater, more exalted and more glorious scope of God's plans respecting Jesus and ourselves!

Odorous spices and beautiful flowers, if you will;

you who drop unbidden tears over the graves of your loved ones—spices and flowers and tears, but never, with them, words of lamentation and despair. Let our thoughts rather be of angels, in shining garments, with whom the ascended souls of our departed are even now walking, and of Jesus, who walks with them evermore by the banks of the river of life.

THE SUCCESSFUL PLEA

The sure way to the ear and heart of God is an acknowledgment of unworthiness. No man who sincerely makes this acknowledgment fails in his suit. "I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant," brought loving answer to Jacob's prayer for deliverance from Esau. "Who am I and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?" is the self-renouncing preface to David's prayer for a perpetual blessing on his reign. It is with a smile of pity at their ignorance of Jesus that we hear the Jewish elders interceding with Him for the centurion's servant, on the ground "that he was *worthy* for whom He should do this." And this is followed by a thrill of admiration at the truer apprehension and stronger faith of the centurion himself, shown by the very opposite plea, "Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof."

Every humble, candid man makes the self-same plea before God, and wishes to make no other. "I am not worthy to be called thy son," was the only word the

prodigal could use, or found it in his heart to use, when he "arose and came to his father." Had he found himself really about to "perish" in the fields among the swine, that is the word he would have directed to be written above his grave. "Unworthy" might then have met the grieving father's eye, instead of falling, as it did, on the rejoicing father's ear. And just that is what all grave-stones, if truly inscribed, must say to the eye of the Heavenly Father from whom all have gone astray. But more may now be inscribed, seeing that the prodigal lived to return and has given us proof of the Father's tenderest compassion. Beneath the Prodigal's heart-broken "Unworthy," there may now be carved the ring, the shoes, the robe, and the table laden with the feast. What inscription and what emblems could more truly or touchingly befit the burial-tablet of any dear child of God?

COMMON-SENSE, FAITH AND IGNORANCE

The acting out of true religion, as we find it unfolded in one of our Lord's parables, is made up in about equal parts of Common-Sense, Faith and Ignorance. The husbandman "casts seed into the ground." That is his common-sense. This done, he "sleeps and rises night and day," in full confidence that the seed will "spring and grow up." That is his faith. But, it is added, he "knoweth not how." That is his ignorance.

For the doer of the things that most need to be done, this "how" is a question which may either be ignored or the consideration of which may be indefinitely postponed. Be she the veriest "fool" as to the chemistry of combustion, the housemaid "errs" not in the boiling of her tea-kettle. Be the husbandman ever so unversed in the philosophy of plant-growth, he is yet at no loss as to the plowing of his field or the sowing of his seed. He is not that other fool he would surely be, were he either to decline or delay his farm-work, unless he first have fully explained to him the scientific secret of seed-sprouting, stalk-shooting and ear-filling. Prompt to do his stint, he trusts with no distraction of doubt that his silent and unseen Co-Worker will do His own full share of their joint undertaking; that He will see to it that soil and sun and shower and season do, each, its appointed task. Caring less for causes than for results, so the outcome be sure, he will not stumble at the mystery of the cause. Accepting the established facts of farming experience, he goes cheerily through the whole round of summer toil, not puzzling himself about those hidden links which join his own work with the greater work of God.

As is the domain of earth, so, also, is the Kingdom of Heaven. The husbandman knows well what his farm duties are. We know just as well what our Christian duties are. We know what it is, first of all, to treat one another in a Christian way; to do to others and to all others as we would have them do to us; what

it is to put envy away from us and to rejoice in the gifts, acquirements, and successes of others as we would have them rejoice in our own; what it is to lend a helping heart to those in sorrow and a helping hand to those in need. We know what it is to love, pray for and forgive our enemies. Equally well do we know that besides these duties toward our fellow-men, we are to seek for a nearer acquaintance with God by diligent study of His Word and by prayer. We know that we are to pray in our closets and that we are to use all social and public helps of Christ's appointment.

All these are just as plain duties of the Christian as were those in the parable of the husbandman. Are we practising these duties? We cannot but be growing Christians if we are. And these duties any Christian may do and be wholly ignorant of technical theology. No man who wishes to come to Christ need lose a moment's sleep because he cannot understand the new birth or reconcile fore-ordination with free-will. We may have the full and blessed benefit of prayer and know nothing of its philosophy. We may plant and water and gather precious fruit in the Lord's vineyard, yet know not how it is that God quickens the seed and gives the increase. Enough for us that He does bless our labor for Him and for souls; enough that He does bless to us the Word and prayer, and the sacraments and fellowship of His church. We may not see it from day to day, but if we are doing our part faithfully we may rest

in assured confidence that God is doing His; and that we are, therefore, both growing to the stature of perfect men in Christ and gathering fruit unto life eternal.

IV

A RELIGION OF FACTS

Christianity has for its key-phrase, "And it came to pass." It is distinguished from false religions in that it is essentially a record of events. It is this advantage which it has of certified narration over uncertain speculation that gives it a reach which is infinitely above all that to which even the most profound philosophy has ever attained. Who of all the "wise and prudent" thinkers of all the ages is more wise and prudent than is Plato? Yet Plato has no story to tell us. It is the Athenian cult. What "all the Athenians" want, what "all the strangers" who have caught from them the spirit of mental collision and combat want, is not finalities, but new and yet newer things about which there can be no end of discussion —a competitive field for logical and metaphysical gymnastics. So long as St. Paul has anything to offer about which they can dispute with him, it is all right. They will not only argue with him to the "end of the chapter," but they will then be just as eager to begin a new chapter of disputation. The history of philosophy, indeed, has no *last* chapter, ending with maledictions against any man who shall either add to, or take from, the words that have been already spoken.

St. Paul does indeed have something new to say to these ever-inquisitive Athenians by way of argument, but what is vastly more to the purpose, he has news to tell them. He is not, from choice, a disputant. He is, chief of all, a reporter of up-to-date transactions. They listen not only patiently, but interestedly, to the new argument about "the unknown god"; but no sooner does he go on to clinch his argument with the news of Christ's resurrection, than they call him down, and, with their hootings and cat-calls, compel him to stop.

It is the historically established fact of the resurrection that makes it so well worth while to know all else that can be known about the words and works of Jesus. But for His resurrection all else would be but little more than a matter of interesting but merely human biography. His having been both "raised up" and "taken up" gives a life-and-death significance to His whole mission upon earth.

Essentially, then, Christian preachers are always and everywhere to be evangelists—to preach as the Evangelists wrote—not inferences, experiences, systems or dogmas, but—facts. It is the "*Gospel*—the Good News—according to Matthew"—not the catechism or the creed. "Ye are my witnesses," says Jesus; and the business of a witness is to tell not what he, the witness, feels or infers from the facts, but the facts. Tell the facts. Tell them over and over again. Keep on telling them. Then let the facts speak for themselves. Let them make their own

appeal to the minds, consciences and hearts of those who hear them. "It is the facts," says Paul to his Corinthian brethren, "in which you stand. It is the facts by which you are saved. It is the facts that you are to hold fast—the facts which I delivered to you, first of all, and which you also received—how that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He was raised again the third day; that, as an indisputable proof of this, He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that, of five hundred brethren at once; that He was seen of James, then of all the apostles; and, last of all, of me also."

Some are, no doubt, at a loss to know just how to take St. Paul when he says that he rejoices and will continue to rejoice in even make-belief preachers of Christ; who have only a feigned interest in what they preach. What has now been said makes it easy of interpretation. If there be a fact which it is all-important for the world to know, let any one tell it who will. The Tories of the American Revolution did not much like the way the war had ended. Yet, if they pretended to like it, and started out to spread abroad the good news of the peace that had been made with the mother country, even the most loyal of patriots would have bid them Godspeed. "Tell it to all the inhabitants of the land." It is what they want; what they need; what they are waiting to hear.

"Go into all the world," is the great commission, "and tell to every creature in it the 'good news' of Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

who, having been delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification."

THE MULTITUDE OF THE SAVED

It is both comforting and inspiring to note the different ways in which the earth's population and the population of heaven are increased.

Here, one goes out of the world almost as fast as another comes into it. Had it been all entrance and no exit, the globe's population, like the corn which Joseph gathered in Egypt, had long since exceeded the limit of practical notation. As it is, decrease by death keeps almost even pace with increase by birth. The most healthful city outgrows but slowly the enclosures of its dead. Through war, famine, pestilence, earthquake, volcano, fire or flood, the ratios may be so sadly and suddenly reversed that, as in Martinique, it becomes easier to count the living than the dead. While it may have taxed an antediluvian statesman's power of computation to sum that old world's population, a child now needs but his "eight" fingers to tell how many souls were then "saved by water." To know at any nightfall the aggregate of the earth's inhabitants, we must take from that day's census of the newly come, the evening list of the newly gone.

But, thanks be to the Love which we know has provided it, there is another world—another and a better. Were it not so, He who knows both worlds

would surely have told us. In that world whosoever comes, comes to stay—no departing and hence no parting; no cemetery census there to be subtracted from that fair city's ever-growing population; no name ever dropped from that heavenly directory, the Lamb's Book of Life; the new heaven, new in that it is convulsed by no hurricane, cyclone, tempest or tornado; the new earth, new in that no life is ever lost by sickness, earthquake, volcano, fire or flood.

Now and then an earthly monarch sees with alarm that the population of his empire has come to a standstill. Never so with our Immanuel's Kingdom. It is ever and forever on the increase; a Kingdom of which there is no more an end of souls than of years. About this wonderful expansion St. John the Divine had in Patmos his once narrow notions wonderfully expanded. He "heard," but what he afterward "saw" was infinitely more than what he had heard. What he heard was but "a number"; the number of "all" that were "sealed of the tribes of the children of Israel." That exact calculation of the chosen, the covenant people of God, is as far as at one time even the "beloved disciple" would have gone, had he like Jesus been asked, "Are there few that be saved?" But after this numerical hearing the Revelator *sees*—and lo, "a great multitude whom no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands and crying with a loud voice, 'Salvation to our

God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.' "

ENJOYMENT FOLLOWING SURRENDER

Our houses were within eye-shot of one another, and we were back and forth in them almost every day. They, of the other house, were a young married couple. The union being every way a most congenial one, they were the happiest of the happy in their new home—a bond all the more strong and tender because hallowed by a common love to the same Saviour. His position as a University professor being exactly suited to one of his fine literary tastes, combined with a fondness and aptitude for teaching, gave promise of a long, successful and happy career.

The thwarting of these fondly cherished hopes came in a wholly unlooked-for time and way. Soon after the birth of their second child, the young mother was taken with a severe pulmonary illness—not alarming at first, but steadily persistent and increasingly violent. The symptoms at length pointed to slow and remediless consumption. Although grievously concerned for the final result, the husband would not for weeks allow himself to despair of her ultimate restoration to her former unimpaired health. But, despite all that the best medical skill and the most faithful nursing could do, the physician was forced, at length, to pronounce the case beyond hope of cure.

Calling at my friend's house soon after this fateful

announcement, he met me at the door, took me by the hand, and led me into a room apart, and while we were kneeling in prayer, although it was with streaming tears and in an agony of grief, he then and there made a full surrender of that dearest treasure of his heart which he acknowledged as a now sovereignly recalled gift of his Heavenly Father's love.

The surrender was complete. The battle against doubt and dread and despair was fought to so clear and decisive an issue as never, even for a moment afterward, to be renewed; victory over death was won, weeks in advance of its approach. The invalid's trust has been serene and unshaken from the first. Now they are one in confident assurance that all has been ordered in infinite wisdom and love. Their earthly companionship is indeed soon to be broken, but it will, ere long, be renewed in a brighter and happier sphere, never to suffer interruption again.

The sick room, on which had rested the gloom of the husband's hitherto inconsolable grief, is now so brightened by his changed look and manner that friends are drawn to it by the cheerful greetings with which their visits are now met. The winter sunshine which floods the room typifies the confiding love which now brightens all hearts and faces. It is the joy of sweet and loving surrender. And it continues to the end.

In an even more beautiful way the invalid mother evinced the reality and depth of the like joy-imparting surrender. The new-born child was sent miles away

in the country to a faithful nurse, who was in the habit of bringing the baby in, every few days, for the mother to see. A friend suggested to the mother that this was mistaken kindness on the part of the nurse, owing to the new pain which each of these partings must give her. "Oh, no," she said. "I had my final parting with the little fellow weeks ago. I gave him up to God as soon as I was assured that I was not going to get well. The pain of parting is over; let the nurse bring him in as she has been doing."

How well for us could we as God's children anticipate our appointed end by an immediate, full and loving surrender to Him of our whole earthly life and of all, even the most valued, of our earthly plans, ambitions, possessions and hopes. From the moment of such voluntary divesting ourselves of it, then, and then only, do we enter on our fullest enjoyment of the world.

THE SILENT LIFE

For one, I know of nothing on earth so sweetly hallowed, so exquisitely sacred, as the silent life of a little child; nothing which so directly and without the medium of any consciously intellectual process assures us of the being of God by bringing upon the spirit the hush of His over-shadowing presence. It was for those silent beatitudes which come only in answer to prayer that those far-seeing mothers who

brought their little ones to Jesus, came asking that He would "lay His hands on them and pray."

The record is not that Jesus loved and prayed for little children as a class, but that He took them in His arms, one by one and that, one by one, He blessed them. He was careful to individualize even little children; He said, "*This* little child." By so doing and saying He but repeated what was done and said, when His own mother having brought Him to the temple to do for Him after the manner of the law, the devout Simeon took Him in his arms and said, "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."

Nor of little children only is it true, this personalizing by prayer. This silent life, this deep, ineradicable consciousness of his affinity with the unseen Creator and the unending hereafter, is that which more than aught else individualizes each and every man both to himself and to God; which assures him that he is more than an inconsiderable fraction, more than an undistinguishable atom of some huge, agglutinated mass; that he is, instead, a distinct personal unit; a separate, whole, responsible member of the family and Kingdom of God; as surely, as completely so, as though he were the only child of the family, the sole subject of that divine Kingdom.

After the fight at Chattanooga those who were sent to bury the slain are said to have come upon a dead Union boy in a sitting posture—his back against a tree and in his lap a pocket-Bible lying open at the

twenty-third Psalm. How, on the instant, does this one young man change for us the whole aspect of that battlefield! Before the battle we were thinking of the opposing armies only as two great wholes, as but two terribly destructive machines—the sole question at issue being which of the two were the more likely to out-match, out-fight, and out-destroy the other. But how completely is the whole struggling mass now resolved into distinct and rounded personalities; how flashed upon us the conviction that amid all the roar, confusion and carnage of battle, each soldier stands just as clearly apart to the All-seeing Eye as in the stillness and solitariness of the closet of secret prayer. How blessedly real it makes for us the fact of a close, personal relationship to Christ, and the possibility that this relationship may be for each and every soul a union of intimate confidence; of sweet and indissoluble affection. How it raises us above the dreary monotony of all commonest things, lifting each soul to the sacredness of individual fellowship with the one all-merciful Father, the ever-loving Saviour, the all-comforting Spirit. Instead of the noun of multitude, "mankind," so cheerless in its vagueness and generality, how it gives us, in its stead, the warm, loving personality, giving us to Christ by our names and giving Christ by all His appropriate names to us; inviting us whenever we will to turn away from all the neglects, injustices, envies and cruelties of the world, and with the upward glance of the loving child's confidence to say, "The Lord

is *my* shepherd; *I* shall not want. He leadeth *me* by the still waters. He restoreth *my* soul. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort *me.*"

The Bible is, in this respect, just such a book as we might expect it to be, if it be indeed a message from God to us His children.

It was the sad lament of one of the greatest of heathen philosophers that "God does not care for individual men." But we see everywhere in the Bible that God does care for individual men. Over thirteen chapters of the book of Genesis are taken up with the account of His dealings with Abraham; with only touches here and there of contemporaneous history, and those given to illustrate more fully the life and character of the patriarch. Over eight chapters are employed for the career of Jacob, over twelve for that of Joseph—thirty-three out of the fifty of which the book is composed. Joseph is not brought in to set off the grandeur of Egypt, but Egypt is introduced to show the care which God takes of Joseph. One whole book, and that one of the longest, is given to prove the regard which God had for one man struggling to keep his faith under manifold and overwhelming afflictions. Little is told us in that book of the arts, manners or politics of that day, but who has not heard of the "patience of Job and seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy"!

So, all through the New Testament, how many names are given with minute relation of time, place

and circumstance, of those whom Jesus instructed, comforted and healed. Everywhere we see Him as a tender friend and helper, adapting his ministrations of mercy to the special needs of each separate one: "He calleth his sheep by name."

The world is yet to be saved from the depersonalizing spirit of industrialism, commercialism and militarism by the self-integrating power of the silent life.

PRAYER ENDINGS

"For Jesus' sake," "For Christ's sake," or, in amplified form, "And all we ask and offer is for the sake of Christ alone," are quite common endings of even our Protestant pulpit prayers.

Right, if rightly understood; yet open to the injurious construction of favoring that conception of God which makes Him to be but a sternly avenging Judge whose righteous wrath would at once fall on sinners but that the compassionate Jesus steps in between us and God, and Himself invites and receives the stroke of our deserved retribution.

Such theory of the atonement would be paralleled by the case of a criminal who has been tried, convicted, and sentenced to a deserved death, but for whom intercession is made by the magistrate's favorite son. "Not that I have the least affection for this justly condemned criminal," says the magistrate; "he deserves none; but I do love you, my son, and for your sake, and for your sake alone, I grant the pardon you ask."

Or, as it really was with Powhattan, Pocahontas and Capt. John Smith. The angered chief had no love, not even pity, for his captured enemy, on whom he was about to let fall the death-dealing blow. But most dearly did he love his darling child, and it was for that love, and not for any love for himself, that the prisoner's life was spared.

In complete and most comforting oppositon to this view the following Scripture citations show clearly that it is to the self-moved and self-abounding mercy of God that we owe the thought, purpose and method of our salvation.

"The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake." 1 Sam. 12:22.

"He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Ps. 23:3.

"Therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me." Ps. 79:9.

"For my name's sake will I defer mine anger."

"For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it." Isa. 48:9, 11.

"O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake." Jer. 14:7.

New Testament teaching is in full accord with this teaching of the Old. "But does not John point us to the baptized Jesus as the 'Lamb' who takes away the sin of the world?" Yes, but He is the "Lamb *of God*"—the sacrifice of God's own providing. "Was it not Jesus who bore the iniquities of us all?" He did most willingly bear them, but it was because

they were "laid on him" by God—borne in obedient submissiveness to God's will: "I come to do thy will, O God." "Is it not a faithful saying that Jesus came into the world to save sinners?" But it is a saying no less worthy of universal acceptation that God so loved *the world* that He gave and sent His Son on this great errand of atonement and reconciliation.

Is a Mediator necessary through whom alone in the deep, unsearchable counsels of His wisdom God can bestow pardon and eternal life on the guilty and perishing? Yet, who but He provides the channel through whom these blessings may be conferred? His "Beloved Son" through whom comes everlasting life, no less than the life itself, is the gift of God to the world, loved by Him to the full measure of so great a gift. It is the exceeding riches of His own grace and kindness that in all ages is shown towards us *through* Christ Jesus. Even the faith by which we receive that saving grace is His own gift. "For His name's sake, your sins are forgiven," says that beloved disciple who declares that "God is love." "Even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32), is a mistranslation for, "As God, *in Christ,*" and thus it is given correctly in the Revised Version. "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me," is part of our Lord's intercessory prayer. And "To God only wise be glory, *through* Jesus Christ forever," is St. Paul's final ascription of glory to Him to whom the glory is due.

I venture to suggest, therefore, as a more Scriptural way of ending our petitions:

"And this we ask for thine own name's sake, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A LESSON IN CHRISTIAN WARFARE

In order to win the happiest success in Christian work, there must be both unity of action and freedom of action. After the walls of Jericho had fallen "the people went up into the city every man straight before him, and they took the city." They went up as one body. None stayed behind, none straggled, none shirked. Every man was in his place in the ranks—priest, officer and private; each in his own place. It was not by a select and privileged few that the victory was won. The army moved with one purpose, as though it were one man animated by one spirit. Yet along with this oneness of purpose and spirit, there was complete personal liberty. All went up together, but every man went up "straight before him"; every man in his own path. Every man had both foot-room and elbow-room. The man was not sunk in the mass. Each soldier fought after his own fashion, and on his own individual responsibility—no crowding, no interference, no damaging criticism; no saying of one to another, "You must grind your spear exactly as I grind mine and wield it exactly as I wield my own."

And shall one follower of Christ now say to another, "Come under my form of church-government; fall in with my manner of worship and my mode of

administering the ordinances, or I cannot recognize you as a fellow-disciple of the Master"? As fitly might the English at Sevastopol have said to their French allies, "We would like your help in the taking of this fortress, but we cannot allow you to have any hand in the business; at least, we cannot give you any recognized place in the lines of investment and battle, unless you will consent to exchange your French gray for our English scarlet; unless you alter your Chassepot rifles into our Enfields; unless on your banners you emblazon our lion and unicorn *over* your *fleur-de-lis.*"

Unhindered by overawing or needless restrictions, sacrificing cheerfully so much of what is peculiar to himself in opinion and practice as the best good of all may require, each hardness-enduring soldier of Christ will wish to go up and help fight his Lord's battles. But because he loves his brethren, also, he will wish for them what he desires for himself, that each of them be allowed to go up straight before him, do his own share of the work, and win and receive his own due share of the reward.

SAVING HIMSELF AND HIS HEARERS

"I do not see," I once said to one of the most devoted and successful of our New England pastors, "how you can stand it to work as you do—hold so many meetings, do so much preaching and pastoral visiting and so much marrying and burying besides."

"Oh," replied he, "that is nothing; a minister's hardest work is to take care of his own heart."

As much as to say that only a good instrument can be instrumental of good. Would a man be a blessing? he must first be blessed. Would he be the father of believers? he must himself believe. David does not look for success in teaching transgressors God's ways so long as his own transgressions are not repented of and forgiven. It is by a true paternity of faith that Paul claims the Corinthians as his own children in Christ. The preacher of salvation must first save himself. So Paul enjoins Timothy: "Take heed to thyself; by so doing thou shalt save thyself." But as he would save them that hear him, he must also give heed to his "doctrine." He must continually see to it that he *preach to save.*

Only so much of his preaching as abides in renewed and sanctified souls will welcome the preacher in the great day of final award. Not, "Here am I and these sermons of mine, sound in logic, faultless in diction and graceful in rhetoric"; but, "Here am I and the children whom Thou has given me."

Then will be seen how wide and impassable is the gulf between the most elaborate discourses which yet fail to quicken into spiritual life, and new-born souls given to us by God to walk and talk with us in loving and grateful companionship through all the unending years.

EDDY AND STREAM

Whenever and wherever are promoters or projectors, they must use such helpers as they can find, whether the selected agents are well adapted to their purposes or not.

Hence it is that merely human endeavors are so often blocked; sometimes by the dearth, incompetency or intractability of laborers; sometimes by the prejudice, narrow-mindedness or down-right opposition of those whose concurrence is indispensable to the carrying on of the work; sometimes by natural obstacles almost insuperable; sometimes, as in the digging of the Suez and Panama Canals, by all three obstacles combined. Genius, combined with unconquerable determination, may indeed surmount these difficulties, yet, all the same, the difficulties do interfere with and delay, even although they may not ultimately defeat, the triumph of the projector.

Whenever and wherever God wants a man for any place or work, He has but to make him. He endows and trains him, brings him on the stage of action at exactly the right moment; then guides and sustains him until his work is done. "He knew who the man was that should deliver His people from Babylon, and called him by name scores of years before he was born, saying of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure.'"

The purposes and plans of God proceed under His wise and wide survey with harmonious convergency

to the desired end; even as the Amazon folds in his mighty embrace all his great eddies and sweeps on, unhindered by them, to the sea.

BEYOND PERADVENTURE

At a distance, we see rising from the threshing and winnowing floor only clouds of dust and chaff; we hear only the rumbling, rattling and clattering of wheels and shaken sieves. But, on closer inspection, we see streaming into the waiting bags the life-supporting grain.

So it were but a narrow, starved and pinched conception which would lead us to find ever in the clamor of political controversy, in the darkening of the air by sectarian strife, in the mad rush and din of money-getting greed; to find in any or all of these the slightest ground for discouragement to effort for the promised coming of the Kingdom of truth, righteousness, liberty and peace in all the earth.

In the vocabulary of that Kingdom the word "crisis" has, therefore, no place. Critical times there have, indeed, been in battles, sieges, revolutions, dynasties, governments; in the history of this and that movement for civic and political reform; of individual churches, missions, revivals. The crisis once passed, there has come either progress or decline, establishment or extinction. But never has there been, never will there be, an uncertain point of danger in the carrying out of the Divine purpose for the world's redemption.

REINTRODUCTIONS

It is a common enough experience that an acquaintance to whom we were years ago first introduced seems to us, after a time, so changed in manner or appearance that reintroduction becomes necessary to recognition. "He has grown so out of our knowledge" is our way of explaining it. We chide ourselves for our obtuse imperception, realizing that the embarrassment it has occasioned us might have been avoided had we been more discerning of our friend's real character, or had we followed more intelligently his developing purpose and career.

John had introduced Jesus as "The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Jesus had Himself told His disciples beforehand of His death and resurrection as indispensable to the accomplishing of this His great work. A more careful weighing of this foretelling, and the two in their walk to Emmaus on that first Lord's Day afternoon would not have talked to one another in the doubtful, sad and fearful way they did; they would have been spared that reproof from the unrecognized friend who had joined them, "Oh, fools and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken," and they would not have needed the reintroduction he gave them of Himself as their risen Lord at the breaking of bread. His resurrection would then have been to them not a surprise, but an expected and joyous fulfilment.

Their understanding having been thus once opened,

we look naturally to see the disciples guard themselves more carefully against any further discounting of the promises and predictions of Jesus. For a time they do. They continue with one accord in prayer and supplication for the promised Spirit. The manner of its outpouring was more startling by far than was the manner of the resurrection. The fact of the resurrection was disclosed with the utmost quietness—disclosed gradually to but a few at a time. Pentecost came suddenly. It came with a rush—a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind. Cloven fiery tongues appeared. Once it would have affrighted them to hear such a sudden rushing sound, and to see such tongues of fire, even had they been playing on the ceiling or upon the walls of the chamber where they were sitting. These forkèd fires come straight down from above and, sitting, hold their place upon the head of each of them. Startling indeed! Yet are they not in the least startled. They do not count it strange, but begin at once to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance. Jesus has no need to reintroduce Himself to them as bountiful bestower of wisdom and power by the Holy Ghost. Recognizing Him as their gracious promiser steadfastly making good to the full the utmost that He has promised, they begin at once, with no fear of failure, to speak with other and unfamiliar tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance.

Peter's intelligence is now broadened enough to understand the risen Christ as the real subject of prophecy in the sixteenth Psalm; yet he needs, and

later on must receive, a reintroduction to Jesus as Saviour of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. So tightly closed by Jewish bigotry had been both mind and mouth that both had to be pried open by special vision and command. Only then could Peter say, "Of a truth I perceive."

Alas, that some of us should have needed, through our purblind "slowness of heart to believe," so many reintroductions to God as our Father with all that tenderest fatherliness implies; to Jesus as our loving, heavy-laden cross-bearer for our sin-burdened souls, and to the Holy Ghost as our full and immediate Sanctifier (if only we will let Him be), as our Comforter under whatever sorrow, and as our ever-ready and faithful Guide "into all truth."

When, if ever, shall we take it to our very heart of hearts, not once only, but once for all and forever, that God is all that He so fully declares Himself to be, that He means all that He promises, and that all which He has promised for both ourselves and the world He will, even to the uttermost, assuredly fulfil.

THE CROSS A SYMBOL OF OBEDIENCE

In either the true son's or the true servant's "What wilt thou have me to do," the stress-word is "what," willingness to obey being taken for granted, whatever the command.

By some commands, however, the spirit of obedience is more severely tested than it would be by others. While "an angel would obey with equal alacrity,

whether bidden to sweep a street or rule a kingdom," he might properly enough prefer the latter, were it his to choose.

The voluntary surrender, if for a time only, of rank, riches and honor, any sound mind will, " if it be possible," avoid. Jesus would gladly have escaped making such surrender, if he could. Had it only been His Father's will, He would have had pass from Him not only the cup of Gethsemane and Calvary, but that also of the Bethlehem manger, of life-long poverty and dependence and of the servant's form. As that could not be, His whole life from first to last was one continuous act of most perfect and willing obedience.

While, therefore, to the question, " For what did Jesus Christ come into the world," we have for the proximate and specific answer, " To save sinners," we also have given us, " To do the will of God," as that ultimate and generic answer which the, as yet, unincarnated Christ Himself prefaced with, " Lo, I come."

What the Father did was to deliver His Son up to the world that the world might do with Him as it would. There was no call or occasion for God to stir up the avarice of Judas, the scorn of the elders, the malice of the priests, the time-serving fear of Pilate, the fury of the mob, the zeal of the soldiers to the carrying out of a familiar decree of blood. He had not to depute angels to ply the scourge, plait the crown of thorns, put on the mock apparel, drive the nails or thrust the spear. Men were at hand ready enough, unbidden and untempted, to do it all—the natural out-

working of an enmity roused to rage by the fearless preaching of God's pure truth exemplified and confirmed by the preacher's sinless life.

To take one's cross, then, means the deliberately-formed determination to do one's whole duty at what hazard soever and at whatsoever cost—the extremest hazard possible being the hazard and loss of life itself. What the actual cost, no intending follower of Jesus can beforehand compute; whether a life of calm repose or whether it may be "given him on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake." Paul was shown, indeed, what great things he must suffer for the Master's sake, but it was only little by little as he went along. It was denied to Peter to know how John's career was to differ from his own. Alike in fidelity, yet how unlike in service and in suffering—Peter crucified; John dying peacefully in his bed at a good old age! We pledge ourselves "in blank" when we become followers of Christ, leaving it entirely to Him to fill out the lines, but ready to honor whatever drafts, be they few or many, great or small, which He may make upon us for either service, sacrifice or suffering.

In one respect the obedience of Jesus to the death of the cross was an obedience which He alone could render. For while on the merely human side He came to his death as did Abel, Stephen and Paul to theirs—martyrs alike from the exasperating goodness of an unalterable purpose to do the will of God—yet to Jesus came a suffering deeper by far than that

caused by Cain's club, the witnesses' stones or Nero's sword—the agony and grief of a cross of expiation for the world's sin, the chief anguish of which lay in the hiding from Him of His Father's face.

That anguish His faithful followers are spared. To Stephen was vouchsafed the vision denied to the crucified Christ. While the stones were raining on the martyr's head, lo, the heavens were opened and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. That which was actual to Stephen the like steadfast faith will make virtual to any and every obedient child of God during however sorrowful a life, in however painful a death.

OPPORTUNITY THE TEST OF CHARACTER

The desire to know beforehand the character and qualifications of those with whom we contemplate having either social or business intercourse finds expression in the confident boast of practical phrenology. By practitioners in this so-called science, intelligence offices are opened in which the skilful manipulator of heads offers himself as an infallible guide to the safe selection of both intimate companions and associates in business. The attempt is thus made to put prophecy in the place of probation, and, by so doing, to revolutionize the world-old method for the determination of character, endowment and adaptation. However sincere the attempt, it is both futile and misleading. For the clear ascertaining of such mental and moral values, the actual conduct of life is the only

accurately weighing instrument. Opportunity is the one true test; the seeing how any man does what it is given him to do. In every home, office, shop, store, school of learning, hall of legislation, are poised invisible scales by which are silently weighed husband and wife, father and mother, child, brother and sister, merchant and clerk, capitalist and laborer, teacher and pupil, law-maker, judge and executive official. By improvement, misimprovement or non-improvement of afforded opportunity is each probationer both tried and made. Antecedent demonstration is altogether out of the question. Until thus tested the probationer does not himself know just what manner of man he is. Whether it be in the home or in business, the men and the women who, year after year, make a failure of life are as much an astonishment to themselves as they are to their acquaintances and friends.

In this present life of ours in this way tested may be seen as in a mirror the life that is to come. The fleeting fashion of this world becomes the fixed fashion of the next. In this present scene of things is enclosed the germ of that spiritual kingdom whose issues take hold on eternity—those principles of moral order which must determine each man's place in the coming world. Our proneness to dangerous familiarity with the opportunities and momentous possibilities of the everyday life we are now living, gives startling significance to the Master's words, " Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this that the kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto you." In the different courses and charac-

ters here taken and formed one sees the finger of God pointing silently to the awards of eternity. We mistake if we think of the "day of judgment" as the weighing day. That day is simply the day for declaring the result of this earthly trial and assigning to each man that "place" which he has already made "his own"; his final answer to the question asked day by day of his earthly life now ended, "Will this man glorify the God in whose hand his breath is and whose are all his ways?"

THE WEIGHING OF A KING

Risen at length by inheritance to the throne of a great empire, a monarch has presented to him the possibility, through right ruling, of such usefulness and renown as even Gabriel might envy. Will he see this path of honorable fame, and, so seeing, will he follow it? Will he stand at attention before the Muse of History as, pointing to an as yet unsullied page, she bids him fill it with a record of noble deeds? Will he heed those purer promptings of his nature which counsel him to live not selfishly for his own, but, self-sacrificingly, for his people's good? Not for a few years of ignoble pleasure, but for an age-long term of worthiest recompense? Will he be instructed by the example of his discrowned father who for his self-idolizing pride was smitten with lunacy, stripped of his royal robes, driven from the sons of men, his heart grown to be like the heart of a beast, his dwelling with the wild asses, fed with grass like oxen, and his body wet

with the dews of heaven, until he should understand that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will? Will he be a true minister of God, a terror always to evil works but never to the good? Will he devise only equal and just laws and be firm and impartial in their execution?

Here is one path bright and glorious; sure to shine more brightly and gloriously to the very end of however prolonged a reign.

Sadly enough, however, there is this other and wholly unlike path. His throne may be the seat of pride and obstinate self-will. Conceiving himself to be raised above that strict accountability to which men of lower place and blood are held, he may drink in the flattery which is sure to whisper that the throned heir of so vast an empire need, in shaping his course, neither to fear God or to regard man. Taking no counsel but of his own passions and caprices, he may become insolently despotic and cruelly vindictive; may abuse his power of patronage to gratify personal favoritisms and revenges, calling around him only such self-seeking advisers as shall keep him undisturbed, both by the wrongs, miseries and protests of his people, and by the hidden dangers which menace the stability of his throne.

Which path will this monarch choose? The two choices are the balances in which he is to be weighed and by which is to be found and declared what manner of man he is in his inmost heart. During the seventeen

years of his reign the long-suffering Arbiter holds patiently aloft the trembling scales. Now strikes the hour when the Weigher lowers the beam. The weighing is ended, the unimproved opportunity is irrecoverably gone. This last banquet of idolatrous mirth fills at once the measure of God's forbearance and of the monarch's guilt. No sooner is the Hand which has so long held the balance disengaged from that secret task, than it comes forth and writes over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the King's palace:

"Weighed and Found Wanting."

After the weighing, the finding. After the finding, the marking. After the marking, the irreversible doom: "In that night was Belshazzar slain, and Darius, the Median, took the kingdom."

PAUL'S QUARREL WITH PETER

Taking all the goodness out of the "good news" of salvation by grace alone is the heresy against which Paul warns his Galatian brethren and to which he charges Peter with having once lent the sanction of his apostolic example.

"You know," writes he, in effect, "how I once fairly hated the word 'Christian'; how mad, how exceedingly mad, it made me to hear it spoken; how fiercely I fought it; how I persecuted and wasted the church of God. But when it pleased God, out of mercy to my ignorant unbelief, to show me the awful

mistake I was making by revealing His Son to me and in me, I began forthwith to be as zealous for Christ as I had before been against him. Not only did I not ask authority or permission of those who were apostles before me; I kept wholly aloof from them; acting as I did under orders received directly from Christ himself. It was three years before I even went up to Jerusalem, and when I did go, the only apostles I saw there were Peter and James, the Lord's brother. With the work they were doing in the home field I did not interfere; did not even show myself to the churches of Judea. All they knew about me was that I was now earnestly engaged in preaching the faith which once I destroyed.

"It was full fourteen years before I visited Jerusalem again. Then I told them the kind of free gospel I was preaching to the Gentiles. I told it to only the leading men there, and to them in the quietest way possible, as I did not wish to have my work hindered by unnecessarily antagonizing their Jewish prejudices. By this prudence I so carried my point that although Titus, who was with me, was a Greek, they did not compel him to be circumcised. The result was that the false brethren who come in on the sly to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ, and to bring us into bondage, could make no headway against us.

"It was some time after this that I had my first and only quarrel with Peter. He had come down to Antioch where I then was. At first, he did as I did;

kept company with some who were not Jews and even ate with them at the same table. He knew, as well as I did, that there was nothing wrong about that. In a way, he knew it better than I did. He had been favored with the special vision of the great sheet knit at the four corners and let down to the earth, and word from God to tell him what it meant—the vision and word which made him so prompt for the day's journey to Cesarea to tell the inquiring Centurion what he ought to do. 'You know,' he said, 'that it is an unlawful thing for a Jew to keep company or come to one of another nation, but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.' In spite of that, there were some so intensely Jewish as to have censured Peter for doing at Antioch what he had done freely at Cesarea. Lingers still in the apostle some of the old timidity which led him thrice to deny his Lord in the judgment hall of Pilate. So afraid is he to have those whom James had sent down to Antioch see on what easy and familiar terms he is living with outcast Gentiles, that he withdraws and separates himself from them. When I saw this, and saw, too, how other Jews, and even Barnabas, were carried away with this dissimulation, I could not let such a cowardly compromising of the truth go, and I keep still. Loyalty to Christ and His gospel compelled me to speak out, and I rebuked Peter sharply and openly. I said to him before them all, 'If you, a Jew, live as do the Gentiles, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as

do the Jews? Jews, as you and I are, we are now enlightened enough to know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. For my part, I am ready to say always, and everywhere, that this grace, this gift of God, through His Son, is my sole reliance for pardon and salvation. I do not frustrate this grace; do not set it aside, and so dishonor it by putting a particle of trust in anything else whatsoever.'"

NOT A HOOF BEHIND

After the plague of flies, Pharaoh proposed a compromise. The Hebrews might go and sacrifice to their God, provided they would not in so doing leave the king's country.

"No," came the prompt answer, "we must be allowed to go as far and in whatever direction we choose—out into the wilderness, a good three days' journey at least."

"In that case," the king said stiffly, "you shall not go at all."

After the plague of the hail, however, he yielded enough to say, "Well, then, name your terms. How many of you are going?"

"Young and old, sons and daughters, flocks and herds; we are all going," was Moses' frank and bold reply.

"That will I never consent to. I will do this, though: I will meet you half-way. I will grant what I understood was all you asked for at the first. You

men may go, but the women and children must stay. That is my last word."

Locusts and three days of pitchy darkness; then from the king a "hurry" call for the two commissioners; "I will meet you more than half-way. Go, little ones and all; you need leave only your flocks and herds."

"No compromise," demands the man of God. "No meeting half-way; you must come all the way to meet us. 'Unconditional surrender' is the word. Our cattle must go too—every one of them. Not a hoof shall be left behind. It is all or nothing."

"All or nothing" is the demand and rightful claim of Jesus. No half surrenders, no nine-tenths, no ninety-nine-hundredths compromises. Those who came to him hoping for easier terms without exception failed to find them. He at once discouraged the would-be follower who wanted first to be assured that his following would not in the end leave him worse off than the fox without a hole or the bird without a nest. To another and yet another on the same occasion the Master said, "If you propose following me, it must be without any 'ifs' or 'buts'; even though one 'but' be, 'Let me first go and bury my father'; and another, 'Let me go first and bid farewell to them that are at home at my house.'" The furrow once started, no withdrawing the hand from the plow until the furrow is finished.

That husband or father who reverses the terms of Pharaoh's proposed compromise and says, "Yes, my

wife and my children may join the Lord's pilgrim band and welcome," while himself hanging back, will find that no such family concession is accepted by the Master in lieu of his own personal following. It was finding that he could not consecrate himself to Jesus unless he at the same time consecrated his "great possessions" that caused the rich young man to go away sorrowful.

No, "not a hoof behind." Along with that which is most precious—our purest and deepest affections—we must also bring as a willing sacrifice to Jesus that which is least and lowest; all that pertains to even our mere animal nature—so to eat and drink that with the temple of our bodies we may best glorify God.

"A prophet like unto me." In nothing was Jesus more like Moses than in thus demanding that our whole manhood; that families, that nations, that all our business and all our gains should accept without reserve his provided and offered deliverance from the bondage of the world's sin, to be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

FROM ABEL TO ZACHARIAS

No allowed disadvantage of having ill-dispositioned and ill-behaving parents compels or justifies like bad disposition and behavior in the child. What the child should do, when old enough to think, know, decide and act for himself, is to disown the parental wrong-doing and himself lead a right and true life. If, on the contrary, he of free choice acquiesce in and con-

tinue the wrong-doing, then to that personal demerit he adds that of this evil descent. *Voluntary adoption is a stronger judicial bond than is involuntary inheritance.* The longer the ancestral chain of approved and continued transgression, the more firmly it binds. The son who deliberately walks in parental and preparental unlawful ways assumes liability for their accumulated penalty. This gives point to that terrible denunciation of Jesus against the oppressors and persecutors of His day, that the blood of all the prophets from the foundation of the world, "from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias," should be required of that generation.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" means simply this: that when the children decide to make a family matter of iniquity, God can do no otherwise than decree to make a family matter of the punishment.

No descendant of Adam, then, will be punished for Adam's disobedience unless he show his approval of that disobedience by a like disobedient life. Our being "children of wrath by *nature*" is reckoned against us only as we ourselves "walk according to the course of this world," fulfilling by our own voluntary choice the desires of the flesh and of the disobedient mind.

How kind the invitation, how reasonable the requirement, how indispensable the condition: "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and I will receive you, and will be

a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

SELF-HARMING HASTE.

Paul and Silas were fortunately a little too quick for their despairing prison-keeper. A second or two more and he would have made out of his own heart a new and bloody sheath for his drawn sword. Seeing the prison-doors open and supposing, naturally enough, that his prisoners had escaped, he knew that in the eye of the law he was already as good as dead. Paul and Silas knew it, too. They would recall the old Hebrew usage illustrated by the soldier who said, on delivering a prisoner whom he had taken in battle to a fellow-soldier: "Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then thy life shall be for the life of him"; as also by what Jehu said to the eighty men appointed to keep guard over the worshippers of Baal: "If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him."

As for the Roman law, the Philippian jailer had every reason to expect the like fate with that of the sixteen soldiers whom Herod a few years before had ordered put to death for allowing their prisoner, Peter, to escape. His own case, indeed, seemed the more hopeless of the two—punishment of Paul and Silas having been demanded by the popular fury aroused against them by the owners of the damsel

out of whom, the day before, Paul had cast an evil spirit of divination; so fierce the mob that the magistrates, waiving the customary formalities of trial, had ordered them, having first been scourged, to be guarded with the utmost vigilance in prison. Whatever milder views the jailer may himself have taken of the alleged offence, his stern sense of official duty left him no choice. It was, we may reasonably conclude, out of no "gratuitous inhumanity," but in simple obedience to his instructions, that he thrust the two men into the inner prison and made their feet fast in stocks.

The earthquake throb of Christ's rewarding love which brought joy to his two steadfast servants filled the jailer with despair. There was everything to heighten his dismay—the seismic shock, the bewilderment which attends being wakened from the first sound sleep of the night; the darkness, and, worst of all, his seeing by the light he had called for that the prison-doors were open, compelling instant belief that the prisoners whom he had been so strictly charged to keep had fled. Fully aware that no explanation or apology would avail him, in affright and despair he foresaw awaiting him only certain and speedy death. With the stern stoicism of a true Roman, he at once unsheathed his sword, resolved to avert from himself and from his friends the disgrace, at least, of a public execution.

For such self-destruction the jailer's way was, ethically speaking, easy and open. His conscience was

not of a kind to make him afraid. Being but a Gentile, he had none of those sixth-commandment scruples which would have restrained a Jew. As for Roman sentiment, there had been no occasion to fortify himself beforehand by defiant membership in some city "suicide club." That sentiment, as voiced by earlier and later philosophers, was on his side. "The ancient sage," said Chrysippus, "had the consciousness of an invincible mind within, which placed him above the power of fate. He was conscious of an entire equality in moral elevation with Jupiter himself. He was master of his own life and might take it whenever he found that he could no longer live in a manner worthy of himself. On this principle many noble Romans acted, not only when they wished to escape from the ignominy of despotism, but also when disease cramped their powers and rendered life insupportable." The case is cited of a man of threescore and seven lying under an incurable disease who, when his physician wished him to take nourishment, dismissed the doctor with the word, "My mind is made up;" upon which Pliny remarks, "I admire the spirit of the old man and wish I possessed it."

It was the teaching of Pliny that "Among the great evils of our earthly existence the greatest good which God has bestowed on man is the power of taking his own life," and it was in this prevailing temper of sadness mixed with cold resignation that he encountered and fell a victim to the flames of Vesuvius.

Seneca maintained that "The eternal law has made

nothing better for us than this, that it has given us only one way of entering into life, but many ways of going out of it. . . . If thy mind then be melancholy and in misery, thou mayest put a period to this wretchedness. Wherever thou lookest, there is an end to it. Seest thou that precipice? There thou mayest have liberty. Seest thou that lake, that river, that well? Liberty is at the bottom of them. Seest thou that little tree? Freedom hangs upon it. Thy own neck, yea, every vein in thy body may be a refuge to thee from such servitude."

A few years only had elapsed since this stoical philosophy had been exemplified by the death of two of Rome's noblest sons on that very spot. After the victory of the imperial army under Anthony and Octavius in the battle at Philippi, Brutus and Cassius, who had staked the Republic on that single engagement, both perished by throwing themselves on their swords, escaping thus an ignominy they could neither avert nor bear by "flying with their hands when no longer able to fly with their feet." To these examples of desperate determination this Philippian jailer is about to add another, but that instantly the tables are turned. The warden is now become the ward. The two men whom he has been keeping from mob violence are now to keep him from self-violence and self-destruction. Seeing his forlorn and desperate purpose, Paul cries out with a loud voice and just in time to prevent the fatal stroke, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

Another marvel in this scene of wonders—prisoners declining to be rescued and, in place of killing the guard, preventing the guard from killing himself. Bent a moment ago on destroying himself, the jailer is now all anxiety to know how he shall save himself; not for this world, but for that other world into which, all unprepared, he was about to plunge. "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" is the question which he instinctively feels that these two wonderful men can answer.

When morning came, on what a scene did it dawn! Not on a suicide's ghastly death-wound; not on a widowed mother and fatherless children; not on souls shrouded still in heathen doubt and hopelessness; but upon a household of truth-enlightened, believing, baptized, saved and rejoicing disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To be on our guard against either hasty utterance or act in time of sudden distress or danger; to remember that, bad as things are, they may not be nearly as bad as they seem; to bear in mind that the "unknown being always the region of terror," discouragements look more discouraging when seen through discouraged eyes; that things may be just ready to brighten when they look the darkest; never to forget the wrong of resorting to any rash, desperate, dishonest, doubtful or self-harming expedient for obtaining relief; to know that "God will not have us break into His council-house or spy out His hidden mysteries," but that we must wait His time with watch-

ing and prayer—such are the lessons embodied for us in the Philippian story.

To a man bereft at a stroke of property, children, and health, a foolish woman once said, tauntingly, "What of your God now? Curse him, and then die and be done with it." The man did better. He gave to the world, instead, a world-old and much-needed lesson on the happiness of enduring. By reason of it all the generations since have heard of and seen two things which it would have been an unspeakable loss to have missed—"The patience of Job and the end of the Lord."

What the Lord's beginnings may be with us in this world matters comparatively little since, as both Job and the jailer found, His "end" shows Him to be "very pitiful and of tender mercy."

OUR ONE CONCERN

These seven disciples are now at a standstill, knowing not whither to go or what to do. For the three years past all has been plain. They have been doing their work under the immediate direction and supervision of the Master. But, although He has twice appeared to them since His resurrection, He has given them no instructions as to future service. Has their apostolic commission, then, expired? If so, will it be renewed, and when? The over-strenuous Peter is impatient of delay. He will do what he can. He will go back to his useful though humble pre-apostolic work. Until there are again more men to catch,

he will again catch fish. He does not say tentatively, "Suppose we go a-fishing, then?" "I am going," he says, in his bold, independent fashion. The six falling in, they all start together for the lake, pull out from shore, drop anchor and cast the net. Making no catch, they row, anchor and cast again. They try their luck in this place and that, but without success. Undisciplined landsmen would have given up in disgust; would have tumbled the limp net into the boat, pulled straight to shore and scattered to their homes long before midnight. Not so with these seven experienced fishermen. Too well they know the fickleness of their craft to think of farming the sea as the farmer farms his fields. With the fisherman's proverbial patience they toil through the entire night till the stars fade and the east reddens with the dawn.

Now, looking shoreward, they see a stranger standing there near the water's edge. He calls aloud to ask whether they have anything on board for a breakfast. "No, we have toiled all night, but have taken nothing." "Cast on the right side of the boat and you shall find." No sooner does the net now settle and spread than they find it dropped into a school of fishes —so full, directly, that they cannot pull it in—not to be drawn but dragged.

John has his hands on the ropes of the net with the hands of the rest; but no sooner does he feel the weight and motion of the darting and struggling prey than a new thought strikes him. Casting a searching glance at the stranger on the beach, in a quick, eager

undertone he says to Peter, "It is the Lord!" John is the first to see, but Peter is the first to act. "What! the Lord, *my* Lord, my kind, forbearing, forgiving Master! This is now the third time He has come to see me since His resurrection, and not a word, not a look or slightest hint has He given me about my sleeping in that sorrowful garden, or about my following Him afar off when His enemies were leading Him away, or about my again and again denying that He was any friend or even acquaintance of mine." No sooner does he catch John's words, "It is the Lord," than he lets go the net, snatches up his coat from the bottom of the boat, throws it on, leaps into the sea, now swimming and now wading to shore, leaving the six to bring in the loaded net as best they can, while he hastens to look once more into those dear eyes whose glance of mingled pity, reproof and love in the judgment hall there broke his unsteadfast heart and sent him out alone in the darkness, weeping bitterly.

If Peter has a lurking dread lest that sorrowful and reproachful look may now be repeated, he is not long in discovering that such fear is groundless—equally so if he has feared lest, although Jesus may forgive, He will never again take back as a trusted friend one who had proved faithless in the hour of such extreme trial.

We, alas, who are ourselves so very imperfect, count it magnanimity if we go so far only as to say of one who has once shown himself inconstant, "Yes, I forgive him, but I can never again trust him." Poor,

pitiable magnanimity! Not so Jesus to his once weak and erring disciple. He not only freely forgives him, He gives him again his freest and fullest confidence. He trusts and honors him just as completely as though Peter had never deserted and denied Him. Jesus does indeed in the most delicate way awaken Peter's grief by thrice asking, "Lovest thou me?" but when comes the appealing answer, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," the appeal is at once followed by the thrice-given renewal of his apostolic commission, "Feed my sheep"—at the same time foretelling for him a life of faithful service to be crowned at its close with the glory of martyrdom.

We cannot doubt that Peter was given this prediction as a needed check to his naturally too impetuous and self-confident disposition. The chastened spirit with which he now follows the Master is in striking contrast with his once forward boast, "Though all should forsake and deny thee, yet will not I." Methinks he is now saying to himself, "Yes, my Lord is taking me at my old word. I said that I would die for him and to that test it seems I am one day to be brought." And feeling now his weakness more deeply than ever before, we are sure of the unalterable longing with which his heart goes out for that steadfast strength which shall keep him henceforth unswervingly true and loyal to the end.

We see, too, how entirely natural it is that on turning round and seeing John, he should ask, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Thou hast appointed

for me the life by which I am to prove my love for thee and the death by which I am to glorify God. What is his work and his end to be? Shall we who have alike enjoyed privileged companionship with thee, who were together on the Mount of Transfiguration and at the Resurrection-tomb, share also the martyr's doom, or must I alone be carried whither I would not?"

This concern of Peter about the future of John our Lord sharply reproves: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Stumble over it as we may, the fact remains that God does make marked differences in both the lives and deaths of even his equally loved children. Of the eleven apostles John alone was spared martyrdom. Persecuted, banished, often in jeopardy of his life, he yet died in his bed in a good old age. He tarried, according to the foretelling, until Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem—it having pleased God to set him apart from the rest for the honored task of completing the canon of his revealed and written Word.

An unaccountable, if not unfair, discrimination seems, at first view, to be made here against Peter. His own later warning, indeed, implies how entirely natural it is for us to wonder at the "fiery trial" which even the best beloved of our brethren are sometimes appointed to endure. Of a certain friend, for example, I am tempted to say, "He is, so far as I can see, no more of a Christian than am I. Why, then, should God give to him so much better a time, so much

more honored a position, than he gives to me?" Who can tell? Health and sickness, weakness and strength, toil and ease, poverty and wealth, lowliness and loftiness of rank, ten talents and two—these widely different gifts and experiences God does either ordain or permit. To some He gives all the abounding comforts of this life "and heaven besides." What concern of mine if He does? My course is plain. I have but to follow Christ—sure, if I do, that however hard and rough the way, it will lead to the same bright and happy heaven at last—brighter and happier, it may be, since the heavier the cross, if patiently borne, the richer the crown.

Give our blind, rebellious impatience its way and it would make a quick average of these so unequally distributed gifts, attainments, prosperities and adversities. Thus of one who has been long and signally prospered we are tempted to say: "Never mind; his turn will come one of these days!" Perhaps not. His "turn," in that sense, may never come at all. It may please the Master to give him a smooth and pleasant path to the very end. "What is that" to me? Is there, then, such a superabundance of happiness in the world that I should enviously wish that there were less?

Two ambitious sons of an ambitious mother once asked Jesus for what they mistakenly imagined were the two highest honors in his gift. The answering rebuke and questioning test are as fitting now as they were then: "How poor and unworthy is your

estimate of me and of my kingdom! Enough, if you can partake with me of this my cup and of this my baptism, which speak not of any earthly glory but only of loving service and sacrifice for the relieving of the suffering, the comforting of the sorrowing, and the saving of the lost."

A QUICK TURN FROM SORROW TO JOY

On their way to the sepulchre the two Marys are walking together in the same dark shadow that from the beginning has shrouded the hearts of mourners visiting the last resting-places of their dead. They go, looking to find all at the tomb as they saw it left by Joseph and Nicodemus on the preceding Friday afternoon. It is as quiet as it was then, but in all else how changed! The stone lying at a distance away and, where it had stood, a black open doorway instead. The accustomed signs of death are gone. Can it be that they had missed the way; that they have come to the wrong spot, as is not unfrequently the case amid the intricate windings of a modern city cemetery? No, they cannot have mistaken either the path or the place. The path from Jerusalem is both short and plain. The sepulchre is by itself, in a private garden. The place and its surroundings are recognized as soon as seen; the same stone-hewn vault, the same rocky shelf on which they saw tenderly laid the lifeless body of their Lord. Here lay His head, and there His feet. But there where lay His feet are now only

the linen bandages in which the body was wound, and here wrapped together in a place by itself is the napkin that was about His head. Even the silence is changed; more profound and painful than it would be were the body still here.

At this so strangely altered appearance the two friends are most deeply and painfully perplexed—the perplexity soon turns to affright as close beside them is suddenly seen standing, with lightning-like countenance and snow-white apparel, an angel of the Lord. Falling upon their knees they lean forward, bowing their faces in terror to the ground.

From this terrified suspense they are quickly relieved, however, by the loving tones of the angel's voice which is as fear-dispelling as his words: "You seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. He is risen. Come see the place where the Lord lay."

But why this "Come"? Had they not already and but just now seen the "place" and noticed carefully how everything about it appeared? Yet well does the angel say, "Come"; so differently will the self-same burial-place look to them, now that they have a messenger from the Father to stand beside them and talk to them of the resurrection. When at the angel's word they do rise and look again, behold, the tomb is no longer the dread place to them that it was before. In that chill gloom which had made of the two nights and of the intervening day one long night of death, their Lord had indeed lain. Why is He not here now? Is it because either Pilate's band, the faithless gar-

dener, or the faithful disciples had first disrobed and then stolen him away? And is it the angel's comfort that he will at once go and dispute with Pilate about the body so that, recovered and restored to its former resting-place, these doubly-sorrowing friends may yet re-embalm Him with their own waiting spices and with this same fine linen which Joseph bought and which the grave-robbers were considerate enough to leave behind?

Far sweeter solace than that! The assurance that never again will Jesus need either grave-clothes or spices or even a tomb; that having entered once for all that dismal waste and unbound all its dread fetters, never shall the place where he lay wear again the gloomy aspect of death; that the dark door of the sepulchre out of which he returns conqueror is to be evermore the gateway, instead, of never-ending life.

To complete their joy the angel makes the women sharers with himself in this ministry of consolation: "Go quickly and tell His disciples. This is still a troubled morning for them as it has been for you. Lost in a maze of sorrow; the object of their deepest love and fondest hopes gone, they know not whither; stunned and bewildered, they wander about, desolate and aimless orphans. Be you the angels to cheer them as I have comforted you. Tell them that Jesus is alive and that He loves them still. Tell them to go to their Galilean home whence He called them and whence they followed Him, and that there amid the places of their most loving communion and away from

the scenes of His humiliation and death, they shall see Him. Lo, I have told you!"

They need no second telling. The wonderful news gives them angels' tongues and almost angels' wings. They depart quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy and run to bring the disciples word.

That angel of our Lord's resurrection still lives. Would it comfort us to find him some day standing in his shining garments by the graves of our own loved ones, and to have him assure us that they still live, albeit their bodies still remain buried? A surer guide, a holier comforter we already have in the ever-present Jesus who, Himself the resurrection and the life, bids us turn our eyes up from our loved ones' graves to the mansions He has gone to prepare for them in His Father's house.

Have we sometimes exclaimed in bitterness of anguish, "O Elmwood; O Woodmere; O Woodlawn; O Greenwood; how you mock me with your beauty because you are so dumb!" Taking Jesus with us always in these visits of sorrowful remembrance, we will say that no more. The friends we mourn are with Him who has gone before, in far better than all places of even sweetest earthly communion, into heaven itself.

Such is the new, bright chapter in the annals of bereavement which was opened for us and for the world by that early-morning walk of the spice-bearing Marys to the sepulchre of their risen Lord.

SATAN'S FALL FORESEEN.

A carpenter's apprentice was once asked by his sick pastor, at whose house he was then working, to offer a prayer at his pastor's bedside. Many a young man in such circumstances would, out of natural diffidence, have asked to be excused. But that young mechanic consented, and so moved was the pastor by his prayer that he took the young apprentice into his family and educated him for the ministry; and, as it proved afterward, for missionary work in India. This led that same pastor to the establishment of a Manual Training School for needy Christian young men, and that school, on being removed from Germantown to Easton, Pa., became the nucleus of Lafayette College. That modest, uneducated carpenter's apprentice saw nothing beyond what seemed to him at that time a simple but difficult duty; but what great and far-reaching results did Christ foresee then and does the world see now!

The mother of Samuel J. Mills dedicated him when an infant to God. Beyond the act itself she did not and could not see. But in and beyond that faithful mother's act of consecration what did Christ see? Looking down the coming years Christ traced the career of that infant child; saw him a student in Williams College; saw him renewing there his mother's act of consecration; dedicating himself to foreign missionary work; enlisting a number of his fellow-students in the same cause and becoming the virtual founder of the American Board of Commis-

sioners for Foreign Missions. What did Christ see in that mother's simple act of consecration? He saw the old and dreadful superstitions of two continents reeling to their fall.

The work done by the Seventy sent out, two and two, was far greater than they had themselves been at all aware of. They had been wholly taken up with the success of their work from day to day, and beyond that there was nothing which they could see. But Jesus tells them that he saw a great deal more and a great deal further. He assures them that their humble work done faithfully, although on so small a field, was to have a world-wide influence; that it would have to do with the complete overthrow of the Prince of Darkness in this world; "Behold," he said, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

Jesus sees as only Jesus can see, how far any act done by him in however humble a way, in however humble a sphere, may extend. But he assures us that every such act helps toward the utter casting down of error and wrong and toward the full and everlasting enthronement of truth and righteousness.

LOVE'S "FINALLY"

Nearly two-thirds of St. Paul's letter (the Second to the Thessalonians) had been taken up with matters which concerned the brethren to whom he wrote; not a word as yet about himself; about his own labors, hardships, dangers and self-denials, although these had been so many and so great. So full was his loving

heart of concern for his brethren's trials, perils and temptations that he had cast about him for that by which they might be shielded, comforted and encouraged. Only then does he say "finally"—"for what remains," as the original is. As much as to say, "I will improve the little time I have left to say a word about myself. I need your prayers as much as you need mine. Brethren, pray for us."

In our own letter-writing we are apt to tell about ourselves first, apologizing for it, perhaps, at the close. But in St. Paul's correspondence we see:

Love's beautiful postponement of self.

Then, too, although he does say, "Pray for us," it is not after all for himself, but for the great work in which he is engaged. He no sooner remembers himself than he forgets himself: "Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." Here we see:

Love for self losing itself in care for its chosen object.

It is as contributing to this that he asks them to pray that he "may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men"—men "that have not faith." Here we have:

Lack of faith as that which makes men unreasonable and wicked in their treatment of those enthusiastically engaged in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus.

Now comes a quick and happy turn from a merely negative deliverance to positive support and assurance of success: from men who cannot be relied on for

help to One who can: "The Lord is faithful, who shall establish you and keep you from evil": or,

Love's constant, ever-to-be-trusted care of its own.

This love of God is that to which, above everything else, we need to have our hearts "directed," or (as the Greek of it is) "made to go"; to go, not in some round-about, dilatory way, but in a straight or direct way, indicating how liable we are to go to God's love—the truest, purest and surest of all—by the circuit either of lesser human loves or of some form or other of impatient, half-doubting legalism. In praying that their hearts may be "directed into the love of God and into patient waiting for Christ," St. Paul shows us what is

Love's most needed, most earnest prayer for those whom it would bless.

V

FROM CELL TO SONG

And what, I said, is this to me
Who doubt the life it comes to teach,
But a stray pebble from the beach,
Worn smooth and oval by the sea?

The tiny prison-house, one morn,
In ruins lay, a shattered shell;
But joyous out from heaven fell
A sky-lark's song, and Hope was born.

BEST OF ALL

If harvests, health and wealth proclaim,
And trumpet fitly sound his fame,
Who grows one grain where he grew none
Or, growing, grows two grains for one;

Sure Gabriel's horn must louder blow,
And glowing hearts must warmer glow
When loves, who never loved before,
Or, loving, loves a little more.

RECOMPENSE

Though mute the muzzled ox treads out the corn,
Nor tosses sheaf or owner with his horn;
Yet if unmuzzled, gleaning as he stept,
The old, just mandate were more equal kept.

AT HOME TO STAY

Where crumbs from shaken napkins fall
  The sparrows come; but, short their stay,
  Pick up their morsels and away
To sheltering ivy by the wall.

Where cities spread their tables wide,
  In rush the morning tides of men,
  But evening sees them all again
Safe wafted to their country side.

And what is life, dear heart of love,
  But one day's exile of thy toil?
  And wilt thou from thy task recoil,
So near to heaven and home above?

JUST AS THOU ART

Just as Thou art; to me, a child,
Self-banished and unreconciled,
To win through patient mercy mild,
Thou comest, Father, unto me.

Just as Thou art; without delay,
Although to rescue me, Thy way
Grows dark with Calvary's bloody day,
Thou comest, Jesus, unto me.

Just as Thou art; my guilty soul,
Beyond my struggling will's control,
To cleanse from sin and make me whole,
Thou comest, Spirit, unto me.

Just as Thou art; blest Three in One,
Accepting as it were my own
The praise of what is Thine alone,
Thou comest, Love Divine, to me.

MY FLOWER-COVERED FOOT-STOOL (A GIFT)

Quick they forget the toilsome hours,
And roughness of the way,
Whose weary feet are kissed by flowers,
When evening shuts the day.

THE HAYSTACK CENTENNIAL: 1806-1906

John Wickliffe's bones, when burned to dust,
And tossed on Avon's tide,
Lit up with Freedom's phosphor glow
Earth's oceans, dark and wide.

Above the night of ignorance
High rose his Morning Star
When spoke the Book, which else were dumb,
In our vernacular.

Praise Learning's Seat, which holds that Word
True master of all books,
Where Science, hand in hand with Faith,
Beyond the horizon looks.

Where five brave souls made strong by prayer,
Their banner wide unfurled,
Re-heralding the Ascension call,
"Go, win for Me the WORLD;"

And plighted troth, with their own hands
To bear the torch of hope
To lands that, to the utmost verge,
In pagan darkness grope.

The Hoosac to the Hudson runs,
The Hudson to the sea,
And tidings of the Cross shall spread
Wide as the waters be.

INDEX

INDEX

A Counterfeit of Life, 35
A Dishonor to God's Love, 44
A Footpath Venture, 64
"Aha," 40
A Hidden Danger, 46
A Lesson in Christian Warfare, 107
A New Chime of Old Bells, 59
A Quick Turn from Sorrow to Joy, 139
A Religion of Facts, 93
A Sure Guide and Goal, 30
A Test of Power, 8
An Ingot of Love, 10
An Original Guest, 71
An Unsafe Venture, 43
An Unsuspected Name, 24
An Unwelcome Gift, 61
Apart and in Secret, 75
At Home to Stay (Poem), 148

Best of All (Poem), 147
Beyond Peradventure, 111
Bible Kakography, 33
Bible Perspective, 26

Charitable to Worms, 6
Climbing, 51
Common Sense, Faith and Ignorance, 89
Consistency in Wrong, 41
Created to Good Works, 49

Deeper than Regret, 7

Easily Stopped, 34
Eddy and Stream, 110
Enjoyment following Surrender, 98
Eyes that See, 28

Faith Tested by Doubt, 8
Fancy for Fact, 10
From Abel to Zacharias, 126
From Cell to Song (Poem), 147

Gain in Beauty; but Loss in Power, 35
Giving Envy the Slip, 24
God's Love for the Sinless, 7
Going Through the Motions, 82
Growing; Not *To,* but *In* Grace, 50

Heaping and Growing, 36
Hidden Links, 28
How Cathedrals Do *Not* Grow, and How Lilies *Do,* 14

Inanimation, 15
Instantaneous Verification, 17
Intercession for the Ill-Deserving, 47
"Isms" and "Ists," 81

Just as Thou Art (Poem), 149

Life, Lord over Death, 29
Love's "Finally," 144

Making the Best of a Mistake, 13

Neighborliness next to Godliness, 59
New Snuffed, 2
No Second-birth Suicide, 46
Not a Hoof Behind, 124
Not "It," but "I," 54

Not Complaining, but Next Door to It, 7

Opportunity, the Test of Character, 117
Our One Concern, 133
Out-of-Place Resolutions, 19

Paul's Quarrel with Peter, 121
Perfect at Last, 70
Prayer Endings, 104
Praying Overdone, 17
Prying Under, 40

Quitting His Observatory, 57

Recompense (Poem), 147
Re-introductions, 112
Remembered and Forgotten, 42

Safety in Truth-telling, 11
Satan's Fall Foreseen, 143
Saved, 48
Saving Himself and His Hearers, 108
Self-harming Haste, 128
Sifted, 39
Sight-worship, 32
Something to Eat, 50

Taking In and Giving Out, 36
The Cross, the Symbol of Obedience, 114
The First and Second Births, 83
The Haystack Centennial: 1806-1906 (Poem), 150
The Impracticables, 11
The Lower Ennobled by the Higher, 79
The Multitude of the Saved, 96
The One Temptation, 55
The One Thing that Counts, 52
The Patience of Growth, 3
The Pterigium of Prejudice, 38
The Right of Way, 34
The Ring and the Feast, 20
The Silent Life, 100
The Spider's Foot, 52
The Successful Plea, 88
The Troubleman, 22
The True Confessional, 19
The True Master, 23
The Unchangeable Past, 1
The Weighing of a King, 119
The World's Yesterday, 1
Three Traveling Companions, 1
Turned, but Not Stopped, 2
Two Summers, 68

Unfailing and Undiscouraged, 20
Unused Spices, 85

Varnish and Vitality, 73
Vulture and Dove, 77

Welcome Home, 45
Weaned, 66
What Comes from Looking, 16
What We Can, 3
Whirled, 21
Write to Me about Heaven, 5

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01148 8899